CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter we shall not attempt to present the educational philosophy and experiments of Annie Besant; but here we shall enter upon a general survey of the historical background of the Indian scene of the early and middle half of the nineteenth century in order to explain the British educational policy of that time, its imposition on indigenous system of education and also the educational reform movements worked out by the early pioneers.

When Annie Besant arrived in India in 1893 she saw the structure of the age-old village society very fastly crumbling down and the ideals and values of Indian education being fully destroyed through the British educational policy. She studied the Indian situation by making tours of whole of India and planned systematically to work for the cause of Indian national education. Therefore, before we take up Annie Besant’s theory and system of education, it would be worthwhile to understand fully the historical background which served as the basis of Annie Besant’s educational pursuits.

The present chapter will be divided, for convenience into two parts. In the first part the discussion will be
done on the British Educational policy and its imposition on indigenous system of education and consequent destruction of the ideals and values of ancient Indian education. In the second part the educational reform movements will be discussed covering the movements of Bengal and Bombay in details.

I

Macaulay's famous Minute of 1835 and Wood's Despatch of 1852 brought turning points in the history of Indian education.

(a) Macaulay's Minute: When Macaulay came to India, William Bentinck was the Governor General in Council. Bentinck was a simple man having both moral and intellectual clarity in him. Being a close friend of Jeremy Bentham he had a utilitarian faith in education. He advocated British language as the key to all improvement and wished to introduce it for the regeneration of India.¹

Before Macaulay's arrival in India Bentinck had already formulated his plan for laying the foundation of English system of education. He watched carefully the indications of the opportunity, when Hindus may start learning English and he may use his power firmly in moulding the process.

¹. Majumdar, R.C. (General Editor): 'British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance', Part II, p.45.
When Macaulay appeared on the Indian scene, a great controversy was going on between the "Orientalists" and "Auglicists". The Orientalists argued "that Indians could never master the English language, that an imposition of the English language would result in resentment. This was not true. Indians were giving increasing evidence of their ability to master English language and a group of Indians led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy had already submitted a memorial to the Governor General on 11th December 1823 urging the government to abandon the proposal for establishing a Sanskrit College at Calcutta and requested to "promote a moral liberal and enlightened system of instruction; embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, with other useful sciences, which may be accomplished with the sum proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with necessary books, instruments and other apparatus". This memorial gives a clear evidence that there was a desire for English education among Indians.

Macaulay soon understood Bentinck's mind and the flow of the tide going on in India in favour of English education. Macaulay had come to India with preconceived ideas about the people of India and their culture.

On his arrival in India on June 10, 1834 Macaulay

was appointed immediately as the President of the General Committee of Public Instruction. This Committee was divided on the question of its educational policy particularly in regard to the medium of instruction. Out of the ten members, five supported the policy of giving encouragement to Oriental literature and were known as the Oriental party and rest were in favour of the adoption of English as a medium of instruction and were known as the English party.¹ The leader of the Oriental party was H.T. Prinsep who was then the Secretary to Government of Bengal in the Education Department and the leader of the English party was Macaulay himself who besides being the President of the General Committee of Public Instruction, was also the Law Member of the Executive Council of the Governor General.

Macaulay declined to take any active part in the controversy, between "Orientalists" and "Anglicists" taking place at the meetings of the General Committee of Public Instruction because he knew that the matter would be placed before him for opinion, he being also the Law Member. It must be borne in mind that "Macaulay was not asked to define a complete educational policy of the whole country, but was merely asked in his capacity as the Law Member

¹ Nurullah and Naik: op.cit., p.131
to give his legal opinion on how a limited sum of ten lakhs of rupees could best be utilized for educational purposes and whether the educational clause\(^1\) of the charter Act of 1813 prohibited the use of the grant of any purpose other than the encouragement of Oriental learning\(^2\).

Macaulay was waiting for the occasion when he would be asked for his opinion. He had already decided a detailed justification in his mind which resulted into a famous Minute regarding the new educational policy, dated 2nd February, 1835 and was written by him "using his legal acumen, forensic skill and his masterly style".\(^3\)

The main thesis of the omniscient Minute was that all the learning of the East was nothing besides the metaphysics of Locke and physics of Newton, and that it was only the torch of western learning that could illumine the Indian mind shrouded in ignorance and superstitions.

Macaulay wrote that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India.

---

1. 43rd Section of the Charter Act of 1813 reads as under:
   
   "It shall be lawful for the Governor-General in Council to direct that..... a sum of not less than one lac of rupees in revival and improvement of literature and encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India......" noted by Nurullah and Naik, op.cit., pp.81-82.
and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the western literature has been admitted by those members of the Committee who support the oriental plan of education..."¹

Macaulay's passed his Minute on to Bentinck along with the threat of resignation.

Bentinck forwarded Macaulay's Omniscient Minute to H.N. Prinsep, the leader of the Orientalists for recording his opinion. Prinsep expressed his views through a note, dated the 15th February, 1835, where he argued that the clause 43 of the Charter Act of 1813 had a particular reference to Indian literature and to eminent native Oriental scholar alone. Prinsep further opined that it would be injudicious to withdraw those endowments, which had already been sanctioned for the promotion of Arabic and Sanskrit learning. But the arguments of Prinsep carried no weight with Bentinck and he approved of Macaulay's Minute and recorded on it "I give my entire concurrence to the sentiments expressed in this Minute".²

In a Resolution of 7th March, 1835, Bentinck passed the following order:

"First - His Lordship in Council is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among

¹ Young, G.M: "Speeches by Lord Macaulay with his Minute on Indian Education", p. 349.
the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriate for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone.

Second - But it is not the intention of His Lordship in Council to abolish any college or school of native learning, while the native population shall appear to be inclined to avail themselves of the advantages which it affords.......that all the existing professors and students at all the institutions under the superintendence of the committee shall continue to receive their stipends.

Third - That large sum has been expended by the committee on the printing of Oriental works; his Lordship-in-Council directs that no portion of the funds shall hereafter be so employed.

Fourth - His Lordship-in-Council directs that all the funds which these reforms will leave at the disposal of the Committee be henceforth employed in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language.¹

This passed resolution marked a significant turning point in the history of English education in India. In this resolution, writes Mukerji "the aims and type of education were defined; the promotion of western arts and sciences were acknowledged as the avowed object; the printing of Oriental works, and grants or stipends to students of Oriental institutions were to be stopped in future, but schools of Oriental learning were to be maintained".²

Critical Observation of Macaulay's Minute:

Many charges have been levelled against Macaulay and his historical Minute. Some critics held Macaulay responsible for introducing Western education in India through the medium of English. But Macaulay "was not the originator of the system, he merely took the tide of popular opinion at its flood that had been running high through the spade work done by Kaja Ram Mohan Roy and his colleagues and the Christian missionaries in favour of westernisation of education".1 When Macaulay came to India, already in Bombay and Bengal, the demand for instruction in English was growing very rapidly and "English books were sold by thousands and there was practically no demand for Sanskrit or Arabic books".2

Macaulay understood the tide and drafted his remarkable Minute. Moreover, it must be noted that Government was also eager to introduce English education in order to get English-educated Indian servants and to use English language as the connecting link between the rulers and the ruled.

Macaulay was correct in his conviction that "the virile civilization of the west was necessary for rejuvenating Indian culture".3 But his recommendation about the

1. Ibid, pp.84-85.
use of English as the only medium of instruction cannot be justified. Macaulay must not have totally rejected the languages of India as useless and unsuitable medium of instruction for teaching scientific or literary ideas. Macaulay's remarks that "A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia," was only a ridiculous statement revealing him as a British snob at his worst. In reality the ideas expressed by him were not the result of his stay in India. He had already formed his opinion long before he arrived in India.

Macaulay was also wrong when he believed that English education would completely anglicize Indians. In a letter written on October 12, 1836, to his father Macaulay wrote: "Our English schools are flourishing wonderfully.....The effect of this education on the Hindus is prodigious. No Hindu who has received an English education, ever remains sincerely attached to his religion. Some continue to profess it as a matter of policy; but many profess themselves pure Deists, and some embrace Christianity. It is my firm belief that, if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be affected without any efforts to proselytize; without the smallest interference with religious liberty; merely

---

by the natural operation of knowledge and reflection. I heartily rejoice in the prospect.\(^2\) Macaulay did not know that Hinduism had a great power of assimilation so it was not possible to find easy way of conversion through English education.

The Filteration Theory of Macaulay also deserves a postmortem. He believed that "Education was to permeate the masses from above. Drop by drop from the Himalayas of Indian life useful information was to trickle downwards, forming in time a broad and stately stream to irrigate the thirsty plains."\(^2\) But this Filteration theory proved to be a mere mirage because it created a separate class of English knowing scholars who had no sympathy with their countrymen. Macaulay wrote in his Minute: "we must......do our best to form a class who may be....a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect".\(^3\)

Thus Macaulay's Minute, though full of grave defects, proved a very important document because its influence can still be felt, even after independence. India's political unity but mass education remained neglected and confined to a small section of people. Mayhew was right when, explaining the total results of Macaulay's Minute, he wrote:

---

"the seed sown in 1835 has produced a crop in some respects far richer, and in others far poorer, than that expected by the sowers and that the soil has yielded to their treatment fruits for which they would be anxious to disclaim all responsibility".¹

(b) Wood's Despatch:

By 1853 a stage had been reached when a detailed survey of the whole field of education in India had become very essential. Nurullah and Naik write: "Since the charter Act of 1813, several educational experiments had been tried; a number of agencies had been at work, in their own ways, to spread education among the people".² On the basis of a thorough enquiry, by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, into the educational development in India, the Court of Directors sent down their greatest Educational Despatch on 19th July 1854. This document was written at the instance of Charles Wood who was then the President of the Board of Control, so this Despatch is known after his name as Wood's Education Despatch, considered by James to be the "Magna Charta of English Education in India".³

Mukerji writes: "This famous document is attributed to the pen of Mr. John Stuart Mill, the well-known English thinker, who was a mere clerk in the India office at that time. Some say that it was perhaps written by Lord Northbrook".³ Whatever it may be but the reality is that

though this document was written more than a century ago, it appears quite modern even at present:

Wood's Despatch was a long document of a hundred paragraphs and dealt with many questions of great educational importance. This celebrated Despatch contains in, Lord Minto's words "a scheme of education for all India, far wider and more comprehensive than the local or the supreme Government (in India) could have ventured to suggest". This Despatch was a symmetrical design, leading up from graded vernacular village schools, through Anglo-vernacular schools and high schools, to college and universities. It suffered a little from this very symmetry, for it left no rooms for a self-contained scheme of Secondary Education. This Despatch also brought the old indigenous schools into a system of grant-in-aid and government inspection.

The Despatch "enunciated the aim of education as the diffusion of the Arts, Science, Philosophy and Literature of Europe. It laid down that the study of Indian languages should be taught, wherever there was a demand for it, and that both the English Language and the Indian languages were to be regarded as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge."1

This Despatch recommended the following measures:

1. "The constitution of a separate department of the administration for education.

2. The institution of universities at Presidency towns;
3. The establishment of institutions for training teachers for all classes of schools;
4. The maintenance of the existing Government colleges and High Schools and the increase of their number when necessary;
5. The establishment of new Middle schools;
6. Increased attention to Vernacular Schools, indigenous or others, for elementary education; and
7. The introduction of a system of grants-in-aid.

The Despatch was the first authoritative declaration on the part of the British Parliament about the educational policy to be followed in India. The scheme of education given by the Despatch was ambitious, rather comprehensive in its nature that Indian educationists have not yet succeeded in fulfilling the tasks which it had set. It recognized but partially, the value of Indian culture, and at the same time it showed the need for implanting European knowledge on it. The Despatch also condemned the Filtration Theory of Macaulay and suggested several measures for spreading mass education and also preserving and encouraging indigenous education and thus provided enough opportunities to a child to get good education, right from the primary to the University stage.

Though the Despatch possess many praise-worthy points, yet it is also responsible for some glaring defects of the present educational system of this country:

(a) It introduced a new educational system based on a chain-work of schools, colleges and examinations under the ultimate control of the State. With the revival of national consciousness, the Government schools did not change according to the needs. Such a policy aroused suspicion among the people about the educational intentions of the government.

(b) The State system of education completely ignored religion and thus put a cruel blow to ancient ideals of Indian education. This fact must not be ignored that the Despatch was a product of a materialistic age and thus it had no spiritual consideration.

(c) Indian Universities, established in Presidency towns, were Indian in name but western in essence. These universities were transplanted to India with root, branch and foliage all complete in one day, and have not grown with the growth of the nation... it was also completely forgotten that a university develops spontaneously and is never an outcome of a State order. ¹

But on the whole the Despatch did organise the present

Indian educational system and brought a systematic order out of misdirected efforts. The sincerity of the wishes of the author of Despatch can never be challenged and the Despatch is important for what is observed and planned then for what it omitted. But the pity is that the Indian government did not act fully upon the suggestions and recommendations of the Despatch and some glaring defects of the present educational system arose from the partial or total omission of many instructions of the Despatch.

(c) The Imposition of British Educational Policy on Indigenous System of Education and Consequent Destruction of the Ideals and Values of Ancient INDIAN Education:

It would be better if we explain first the nature of indigenous system of education as it existed before the imposition of British educational policy, in this way we will understand in detail how Britishers influenced the indigenous education system of India.

Before the imposition of the British educational system "in the background there was a wide spread and fairly well-organized system of indigenous education, which had continued intact down to the eighteenth century and the remnants of which can be seen even today in centres of traditional learning and obscure books of the country. It was, in fact, a well-developed national system consisting of both higher and elementary institutions. These institutions had been in existence from time immemorial
and they had been woven into the texture of the social and cultural life of the people. These were the inheritors and custodians of the intellectual and cultural traditions of the people, and in their own way they tried to fulfill their social obligations.¹

Indigenous educational institutions were of two main types - elementary schools, and schools for higher learning. These two types of education existed quite independent of each other. Those, who aspired to receive higher education, generally did not attend common elementary schools. It is estimated that roughly for 10 boys in elementary schools, there were 6 in higher schools. A fairly extensive system of domestic education was also prevalent in the country. Most of the children from rich families who aspired to higher learning used to receive elementary education at home.²

**Elementary Education**

The Elementary education was quite extensive and was intended for the masses. It was primarily for boys and not for girls. Though education was extensive, the standard was low, and the common school were single-teacher institutions, where many teachers were inefficient, methods of teaching were obsolete, text-books were unsuitable, discipline was slack but punishment was severe.

---

hours of attendance were irregular and holidays were numerous. Most of the schools were without special build-
ings of their own.

The elementary system was widespread consisting of numerous primary schools scattered all over the country-
side. Practically every village had its primary school, its Pathshala. In Bengal alone, according to Adam\(^1\), there were about the 1835 a hundred thousand much Pathshalas. Pathshalas gave instructions of 3 R's and were singularly free from any direct religious teaching. In those no one demanded religious teaching of the village Pathshalas because the parents had unconsciously realized that the school was not the place for religious instruction; for by living in a social environment where religion was a predominating influence, children imbibed the religious ideas and ideals of their parents naturally and without any effort. Moreover all castes and creeds were represented in the school population, and the teacher did not necessarily and always belong to a caste which would entitle him to teach religion to his pupils, more so the pupils in these Pathshalas came from middle and also from the lower classes of society (who were regarded untouchables) thus it was not possible to impart religious instruction.

The teaching in the Pathshala ended at the last stage in training the pupils in advanced accounts, in writing petitions, and business letters, and the like.

\(^1\) Adam's Report - Calcutta Edition, pp.6-7,
This system of instruction lacked in breadth of vision. But the elementary system had also some good points in it. Teaching was in close touch with the life outside, general education was designed for all, but specialization was meant for the intelligent minority. Due to the small size of the school, individual attention was provided by the teacher. In praising this system Adam remarked, "My recollection of the village schools of Scotland do not enable me to pronounce that the instruction given in them has a more direct bearing upon the daily interests of life than that which I find given or professed to be given, in the humbler village schools of Bengal".¹

The elementary school of the Muslims was generally known as the Maktab, Quran School or the Persian school where the distinct need of the students was to acquire an ability to read the Quran written in Arabic. Most of the Muslim children attended the Maktabs, but where Maktabs were not available, they used to attend Hindu schools. Persian, being the court language, was the medium of instruction in Muslim schools though Hindu pupils were also attending in a large number.

Higher Education:

The institutions of Hindus for higher education were the Tols and for Muslims the Madrassahs, which were responsible for the education of the intellectual elite of the country, the Brahmin Pandits and Muslim Moulvis.

¹ Basu, A.N. (editor): Adam’s Reports, p.146.
Such Tols and Madrasas could be found in all important centres of cultural life. In the north Nadwip, Mithila and Benares were famous for their Tols to which pupils come from all parts of India. In the south similar institutions existed and some of them were associated with temples and monasteries. Madrasas were situated in important seats of political power and in Muslim religious centres such as Delhi, Agra, Patna, Murshidabad, Bijapur, Jaunpur and other cities. Persian, being the official language so many Hindu students joined the Madrasas and studied Persian and Arabic. "In these Tols and Madrasas a traditional classical curriculum was taught through the medium of the classical language of the people - through Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. The curriculum was based on the culture of the people and was closely related to their religion".¹

The standard of work done in these seminaries of higher learning was of a very high order. Some men who were teachers in these institutions had obtained great popularity and eminence in such special studies as grammar, logic, law, rhetoric, metaphysics, theology, literature,

¹ Basu, A.N: "Education in Modern India", p.3. It must be understood that though religion occupies an important place in the curriculum, it was by means the only subject of study. In the curriculum there was provision for the study of secular subjects like Astronomy, Medicine. According to Ward, these centres of learning were of five types specialising in one of the branches of learning, viz., (1) logic, (2) Law, (3) General Literature, (4) Astronomy and (5) Grammar.
jurisprudence and science and that scholarship could only be compared to the best classical scholars of all times.

After the advent of the British a new India grew up. The whole of the country was transformed politically, economically and to a great extent socially. The previously existed traditional system were made to change and take shapes in such a way as to adjust according to the needs of the time and situations.

In India education had always been held in high esteem. Thomas wrote: "Education is no exotic in India. There is no country where the love of learning had so early an origin or has exercised so lasting and powerful an influence". But in a country where the political and social system had fallen into a chaotic condition, age-old indigenous education could not be expected to flourish. Indigenous education in India had always been of a classical and spiritual rather than of a practical nature. It was communicated through the sacred classical languages of the Hindus and the Muslims, namely Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. In the curriculum very little science was taught. While the Indian writers had been prolific in their production of philosophic and literary works, they had paid little regard to the development of science.

The imposition of the British educational policy during the first half of the nineteenth century made possible the introduction of the English language through the schools which were shaped after the English system of education and the gradual decay of the indigenous languages and learning. Though Moria, Elphinstone and Munro tried their best to patronize the cause of Vernaculars and the elementary education of the masses yet the accepted policy of the government to create through English studies "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" had made the best intellectuals of India like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others to realize the futility of pursuing a system of exclusively classical education and the great possibilities which a knowledge of the language and literature of the West afforded for the cultural and economic progress of the people. Hence they were anxious for the diffusion of European Education and English language among the countrymen.

The indigenous system was fast going into decay owing to various economic, and political reasons, chief among which were the growing poverty of the people and the withdrawal of patronage which followed the change of Government. This decay in the indigenous system has been ascribed,

in the twenties of the last century, by the Collector of Bellary "to the competition of foreign goods, the movement of troops, and the substitution of European for native rule which despite a less vigorous enforcement of the revenue, had impoverished the country". ¹

These forces were, no doubt, also responsible for the conservative character of the indigenous education. Prof. Basu is correct in his assessment when he says "In reaction to external forces which it could not control, the indigenous system became more and more conservative and rigid, and it lacked the progressiveness which is the sign of a growing system. Meanwhile times were fast changing; but the old system could neither keep pace with the changes nor adapt itself to the new circumstances". ²

In 1823 the General Committee of Public Instruction was set up and was asked to give shape to the educational policy of the government and this committee made its principle that "as the funds at the disposal of the Committee were quite inadequate, it would be best to apply the funds to the higher education of the upper classes", ³ which very sincerely hampered the general elementary education of the masses. Consequently the indigenous institutions were neglected and with them the education of the masses was

³. Ibid, p.27.
also completely neglected. The forces which were responsible for the adoption of Macaulay's and Wood's "policy had by that time gathered so much momentum that any counter-movement, however much it might succeed for the time being, was destined to fail ultimately and, as history proved, it did fail", and so also failed the indigenous system of education in competing with the English system of education.

Many of the defects of the British educational policy can be traced to the early neglect of the indigenous system. Prof. Basu writes "when the Government ignored the net work of the old indigenous institutions spread all over the countryside, it placed at once the first and foremost barrier in the path of educational progress. That barrier has not been removed to this day. It is true that later on attempts were made from time to time to incorporate the remnants of the old system had already become very much worn out and had lost much of its vitality. And as time passed the task of revitalising these Pathshalas (which never died out completely and which continued to exist in a moribound condition) and incorporating them into the new system became more and more difficult. As a result the very instruments which might have helped greatly in spreading mass education now stand in the way as its great impediment". To reorganize or revitalize the old Pathshala is

1. Ibid, p.27.
2. Ibid, pp.35-36.
one of the biggest educational problems of today.  

The indigenous institutions were transmitting the age-old preserved ideals and values of ancient Indian education but with the imposition of British educational policy those old values and ideals, which were necessary to weave the life of the Indian society into the complex whole, were fully destroyed.

The ancient Indian education imbibed many high ideals in the pupils — "infusion of Piety and Religiousness, formation of character, development of personality, inculcation of civic and social duties, promotion of social efficiency and preservation and spread of national culture."¹

These ideals remained in vogue in India in bygone ages. Many traces and relics of these ancient systems are still to be found in India. But the progress and spread of education on western lines has curtailed their activity to a very large extent, and tends more and more to limit the spheres within which they are operative. No western country, not even Britain, have had systems of education which have had such a long and continuous history with so few modifications as some of the educational systems of India. The long centuries through which they held sway show that they must have possessed elements which were of value, and that they were not unsuited to the needs of those who developed and adopted them. They produced many great men and earnest seekers after truth, and their output on the intellectual

¹. Annie Besant: "Shall India Live or Die"? p.52.
aside is by no means unremarkable. The educational ideals and values developed by them, are considered as valuable contribution to educational thought and practice. But the ideals and values were fully destroyed when that momentous change began, which was brought about by the introduction of western education and learning. The ancient Indian education preserved by the "Pathshalas" and "Tols" had become stereotyped and formal and unable to meet the needs of British education system. Annie Besant is correct when she says: "When the company destroyed the immemorial village system, and with it the literacy of the masses"¹ was also destroyed.

II

The beginning of the nineteenth century ushers into a new era in Indian history. When Britishers made a political consolidation of India, they tried to influence other aspects of Indian life, particularly education. The indigenous system of education was considerably eclipsed by the new type of English institutions. The study of vernaculars were gradually driven into the shade and English had attained the main place among the subjects of study. Elementary mass education was totally neglected and higher education at the secondary school stage and university education for

¹ Annie Besant: "Shall India Live or Die?" p.52.
the intellectual advancement for the upper classes of society received total encouragement. In India the shadow of illiteracy gradually deepened and an ever-widening gulf was created between English educated upper classes and the vast illiterate masses of people. In short there arose two sections in the country, one who looked towards British education as a panacea for the social ills of Indian society, and the others to whom English education seemed a sort of slow poisoning which would enslave the mind and social life of the people.

That time, when Britishers were implementing their educational policy, a transition in the social and cultural history of India was taking place. The impact of European civilisation was becoming manifest in various ways, proclaiming the opening of a new chapter in Indian history. Factories were making their appearances around Calcutta. New buildings were constructed in the latest designs of architecture and new roads were built in the vicinity of Calcutta and Bombay. The railways had been introduced and were spreading rapidly. A section of population was rapidly growing up highly European in dress, manners and attitudes of life, sharply distinguished from the rest. Old values and traditions were challenged and even flouted and a spirit of open revolt against ancient beliefs and customs characterized the intellectual and progressive classes. Movements for momentous social and educational
reform, pioneered by Raja Ram Mohan Roy were rapidly gaining ground. Brahma Samaj movement started a campaign in favour of education. Ishvara Chandra Vidya Sagar, Keshab Chander Sen and Devendra Nath Tagore reoriented the Brahma Samaj and their policy towards education. In Bombay reform movement by Hindus and Parsies made a headway progress in advancing the cause of education of the people. And thus an era of educational progress dawned which can be called as the era of Indian renaissance.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy:

In 1815 a new factor entered into the field of educational development. A certain section of educated and liberally-minded Indians, through their long attachments with the Europeans in Calcutta had acknowledged without embarrassment the virtues of western learning, social institutions and the Western social ethics. Of these, the most prominent was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a retired revenue officer of the East India Company.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, known as the father of Indian renaissance, remained prepared for whole of his life to challenge old, obscurantist orthodoxies with courage. The Raja was a great scholar of Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and English. The Raja was the first Hindu to break through the barrier between the ancient East and the Modern West. He advocated that India adopt European intellectual achievements in order to further its own development. His
numerous activities had but one objective, to arouse India's spirit and to free it from the deadening stupor of mediavilism. Through Raja's influence European thought and social standards began to penetrate, to a great extent, the circles of the elite Hindus.

The Raja devoted himself to the study of the different languages of Asia and Europe and the Scriptures of different religious systems, in order to discover the "True Religion". These studies, with his close connection with Europeans and especially the Missionaries ultimately led to his severance from the orthodox fold and made him to devote himself to the preaching of Vedic Monotheism. He was thus admirably suited to act as the intermediary between the advanced sections of Indians and Europeans who solicitous of the well-being of Indians. This section of the Europeans of Calcutta was led by David Hare, a watchmaker by profession, who had come to India in 1800 and took upon himself the task of disseminating education among the people of Bengal. Ram Mohan Roy and David Hare became good friends and in collaboration they drew up a plan for an English institution at Calcutta in 1815. The Raja had at first wanted it to be a seminary for teaching the doctrines of Vedic Monotheism, but the better sense of David Hare, for establishing an English school, prevailed and Ram Mohan Roy gladly accepted the plan.
correct when he makes an estimate of the Raja important role in Indian history, he writes "Ram Mohun Roy's contributions to the making of modern India lay not only in his iconoclasm and in his intellectual evocation of the new era, but also in his practical work, to re-establish the natural texture of society.....For Roy, English education was the portal opening the way to Indians to advance toward equality with Westerners, and he provided critical support for private and governmental efforts to introduce higher education along European lines".¹

Raja was very keen in proving English Education to the young men of his country. In 1816 the Raja offered a piece of ground to Enstace Carey of Serampore for building a school house, but the scheme was never materialized. Soon after, in 1817 he established an English school at Suripara, for free instruction of Hindu boys. It soon had about 200 pupils on roll and the expenses were defrayed by Raja Ram Mohan himself. Shortly after, he opened an English class at his own house under the charge of Moncroft and transferred the most distinguished students of the school to it.² In 1822 Raja opened his school on a large scale on premises near Cornwallis Square and named it the Anglo-Hindu School. It was a free institution

¹. Heimsath, Charles H; "Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform", p.12.
supported entirely by Ram Mohun Roy. "William Adam strongly
desired to make it a public institution to solicit for
public subscription, and to put it under the control of
the Unitarian Committee, but Ram Mohun firmly refused his
consent to the scheme".\textsuperscript{1}

When under the Lord Minto's Minute it had been con-
templated to strengthen the Calcutta Madrassah and the
Benares Sanskrit College, and to establish new orientalist
colleges at Delhi and Agra, Ram Mohan Roy protested to it
in a letter written to the Governor General. The Raja
wrote: "This seminary (similar in character to those which
existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon) can only
be expected to lead the minds of the youth with grammatical
niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no
practical use to the possessors or the society. The pupils
will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago
with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since then
produced by speculative men, such as is already commonly
taught in all parts of India".\textsuperscript{2} Ram Mohan Roy points out
at length how the young students of this seminary would
merely waste a dozen years of the most valuable period of
their lives by acquiring the niceties of Sanskrit grammar,
speculative philosophy of Vedanta, obsolete interpreta-
tions of Vedic passages in Mimamsa, and the subtleties of

\textsuperscript{1} "The English Works of Raja Ram Mohun Roy," p.472.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, p.474.
the Nyaya Sastra.

The Raja then continues: "In order to enable your Lordship to appreciate the utility of encouraging such imaginary learning as above characterized, I beg your Lordship will be pleased to compare the state of science and literature in Europe before the time of Lrd Bacon with the progress of knowledge made since he wrote.

"If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote or more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences, which may be accomplished with the sums proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talent and learning educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with necessary books, instruments and other apparatus". ¹

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's letter was delivered to the

¹ Ibid, p.474.
Governor General and remained unanswered, yet it played a decisive role later in determining the Government's policy.

The Raja looked to education to bring about a receptive atmosphere to new ideas. He wrote text-books in Bengali, and a suggestive Bengali grammar. He established and conducted two native newspapers, the Sambad Kanmudi in Bengali and the Mirat-al-Akbar in Persian and made them the means of diffusing much useful social information. Ram Mohan Roy extended his generous support to all movements and organizations which had even a remote bearing on education.

Writing about Raja Ram Mohan Roy's work for education, Natarajan says "It was his inspiration that started the move for the Hindu College, though he had to withdraw from it because of the antipathy of interested Hindus. And it was his active support which enabled Dr. Alexander Duff to carry on despite the opposition that faced him on his arrival in India. Ram Mohun allowed him the use of his old Brahmo building, brought him students and even attended his religious classes in order to win over critics or silence them.....Ram Mohun maintained an English school in Calcutta from 1817, the Vedanta College for Sanskrit studies from 1826 and personally conducted....journals for the diffusion of scientific, historical, literary and political knowledge".¹

Though Ram Mohan Roy was a sincere admirer of the 'New Learning from the West' he was never dazzled by it. He upheld the cause of personality against Mechanism. He insisted on releasing the vital urge of human nature from the barrier of intellectualism. He was all for regulating life on the principles of Humanity.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahma Samaj Movement:

Raja Ram Mohan was the founder of the Brahma Samaj, a Theistic Church of India. The Raja though a devout idolator in boyhood, he early began to doubt and speculate, and at fifteen left home to study Buddhism at Tibet. After some years travel he returned, by his anti-idolatrous sentiments made him to leave home again, to live at Benaras for the study of Hinduism upto 1803.

When Ram Mohan was serving the East India Company as Dewan for collecting Revenues, he first began to assemble his friends together for evening discussions on the absurdities of idolatory and he also issued his first work, Tuhfatul-Muwahhidin (A gift to Monotheists). This treatise was in Persian, with an Arabic preface, and was a bold protest against superstition and priest-craft. These proceedings brought on him much hostility and even persecution and in 1814 he retired to Calcutta for safety.

At Calcutta Ram Mohan soon established a little friendly Society, Atmiya Sabha, which met weekly to read
the Hindu Scriptures and to chant Monotheistic hymns. In 1816 the Raja translated the Vedānta into Bengali and Hindustani, following this by a series of translations from the Upanishads into Bengali, Hindustani and English, with introductions and comments of his own. These works he published at his own cost and disseminated widely among his countrymen. His writings excited much opposition and gave rise to numerous controversies, but the deadliest blow he inflicted upon Hindu superstition was his effective agitation against the rite of Suttee.

Ram Mohan Roy, on the basis of his Atmiya Sabha, felt able to re-embry his cherished ideal of opening a Brahma Association (Brahmo Samaj) at a hired house, on August 20, 1828. A suitable church-building was then erected and placed in the hands of trustees, with a small endowments and a remarkable trust deed by which the building was set apart "for the worship and adoration of the Eternal, unsearchable and Immutable Being, who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe". The new church was formally opened on January 23, 1830, from which day the Brahmo Samaj dates its existence.

The Brahmo Samaj gave to the Bengali society "a satisfying formula for introducing certain Western ideas and ways of life into their personal lives". Ram Mohan Roy's

---

Brahmo Samaj was, in reality, an institutional form of his formula, having monotheistic character "to teach and to practice the worship of the One, supreme, undivided eternal God".¹

Ran Mohan Roy had a full knowledge of Christianity and for understanding Bible and reading it in its original form, he had learned Hebrew and Greek. So this was the reason that Brahmo Samaj's "teachings and particularly its ethical tenets resembled Christian doctrines. The Samaj rejected the Brahmin priesthood's intermediation between man and God; repudiated idolatry and sacrifices for its public services; ignored caste distinctions; and adopted a congregational form of worship similar to that of the Unitarians. At various times, particularly in educational endeavours, Roy worked closely with Christian missionaries in Bengal. Nevertheless, he believed that all fundamental religious truths could be found in Hindu scriptures, particularly in the Upanishads, that conviction, in addition to the dogmatism he found among many Christians, kept him from conversion to Christianity. His announced purpose was to restore the Hindu faith to its original purity".²

The Brahmo Samaj was a religious body and the involvement of its adherents in the task of social reform was a secondary purpose of it. Ram Mohan Roy, through

---

¹. Ibid, p. 74.
². In a letter to John Digby, the Raja wrote "I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any other which have come to my knowledge", Roy's English works, pp. 928-29.
his broad vision about men and society, wanted to combine in his thought and in his social career the advocacy of religious, social, educational and political reforms.

After Ram Mohan Roy’s death in 1833 the leadership of the Samaj fell in the hands of Pandit Ramchandra Vidyavagish, one of the Raja’s devout followers. But Samaj being in the infant stages, was weak and unpopular, barely managed to survive because of the generous patronage of the wealthy Dwarkanath Tagore, a close friend of Ram Mohan Roy. But after a decade the Brahmo Samaj began to become very popular, because of the new spiritual leadership given to it by Dwarkanath Tagore’s son, Devendranath Tagore.

Maharishi Devendranath Tagore:

Devendranath Tagore latterly known as Maharishi or the Saint was born in Calcutta. He received his early education in the school founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. In his fourteenth year Devendranath joined the Hindu College. Under the direct influence of a religious father and an orthodox Hindu mother, young Devendra grew up a wilful young man, holding the religion of his forefathers in great reverence and when he attained his manhood, he felt within himself an awakening towards a higher life.

Devendranath’s creative leadership assured the Brahmo Samaj of a prominent place in 19th century Bengali
intellectual life, testified to the vitality of Hindu thought even at the time when it was besieged by Western rationalism and the attraction of scientific knowledge. Devendranath’s curiosity for enriching the Brahma Samaj literature induced him to collect the authentic scriptural sources of Hinduism, in that day unavailable in Bengal. The outcome of Devendranath’s search for religious truth was in essence the religion of bhakti, as he expressed it "The pure unsophisticated heart was the seat of Brahmaism".\(^1\)

Devendranath’s intense devotionalism and his ability to convey his feelings to others and to organize a service of worship though drawing membership to the Samaj, had little social reform impact on Brahmos, much less on Hindu society in general. Moreover, the Brahma Samaj under Devendranath did not desire a separation from Hindu society and wished to steer a middle course between popular religion and a total reform. Devendranath’s religious aims concerned only the Hindu community and in fact only the high castes within it.

Devendranath was very much alive to the educational needs of the Brahmo community. He wrote: "We (Brahmo Samajists) have not got a single good school of our own where our children can be taught".\(^2\) Suggesting to start

---

a school for Hindu Children, Devendranath wrote: "If we all combine could we not set up schools".\(^1\)

Devendranath convened a large meeting at which nearly a thousand people participated. About the proceedings and decisions arrived at, Devendranath wrote: "It was resolved that we also should have a school where children would be taught free of charge. ....Forty thousand rupees were raised then and there".\(^2\) As a result to his efforts an educational institution called the Hindu-Hitarthi (The well-wisher of Hindus) was founded and Devendranath was appointed the Secretary to carry on its work. After the first experimental school more schools were started and thus the cause of education received a great impetus in his hands.

In 1857 a new addition was made to the ranks of Brehmo Samaj by the entry of Keshub Chander Sen.

**Keshub Chandra Sen:**

In the middle of the nineteenth century when the emphasis on Westernization began to decrease due to the efforts of some of the reformers, and Eastern Culture came to be better appreciated, and as the synthesis of the two cultures began to be worked out to an ever-increasing extent, the cultural disturbances of the new educational system became less pronounced. It is correct that the new educational policy of the Britishers freed the Indian mind from the bondage of superstitious, but it now began to be understood that all that is new is not surely praise worthy, nor all that is old is condemnable. Discrimination began

---

1. Ibid,p.98.
2. Ibid,p.100.
to be exercised and while absorbing several new ideas from the West, an attempt began to be made to preserve all that is good in the East as well. It is out of this synthesis that the new leadership in Indian national life and particularly in Bengali Brahmo Samaj was born in Keshub Chandra Sen.

Keshub Chandra Sen, born of a well-known Vaidya family of Calcutta, joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1857. "Keshub very early showed great powers of oratory. Among his friends he was regarded as a coming religious leader. He founded in 1860 a Society called the "Sangat Sabha" or the "Believers Association" for the discussion of social and religious reforms". In 1861, he became a whole time missionary of the Samaj and in 1862 he was elevated to the position of the "Acharya" or a minister of the Samaj. But very soon afterwards, because of his radical ideas, serious differences of opinion arose with other leaders and specially with Devendranath Tagore and the retired from the Samaj in 1863. His advocacy of inter-marriage and his objection to the wearing of the sacred thread were two of the most vital objections against him. In November, 1866 Keshub formed a new society called the "Brahma Samaj of India". While Devendranath Tagore's religious aims were concerned with the Hindu community and specially the high

2. Majumdar, R. C. (Editor), "British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance", p. 103.
Keshub's vision encompassed the whole world and he sought a universal faith.

Keshub Chandra tried to infuse new life into the Brahma Samaj. Writing about Keshub’s infinite strivings, Mazoomdar said “Every social, moral, religious went in himself, or in others, appealed to him. His ambition was to serve every community, all men and women. He lived in the midst of an inextinguishable furnace of aspiration, the heat of which he carried into everything he did. He set fire to whatever he touched. His reform knew no bound; the progress he demanded was restless and ceaseless. Nothing declined in him, everything grew. He wanted to change the very face of the earth”. ¹

Keshub brought to the Brahma Samaj a dynamic force which it never possessed before. He was the first to inaugurate an all-India movement of religious and social reforms. Keshub made a missionary tour of Bombay, Madras and North-western Provinces and carried his message all over India.

Keshub Chandra Sen launched a comprehensive programme of social reforms which formed a vital aspect of Indian Renaissance. But here we will try to discuss Keshub's reforms particularly in the educational field.

In 1855 Keshub established the Colutola Evening School. Young men of contiguous neighbourhood attended the classes of this school and Keshub Chandra himself taught some of the higher branches of English literature.

In 1857, he established another society, perhaps the most useful and successful of all his juvenile organizations, called "Goodwill Fraternity". The society was not to harbour any sectarianism on his part but held his belief "God our father, everyman our brother".¹ and thus it was a purely religious institution, the object of which was both theological and devotional. The Goodwill Fraternity held weekly classes on Sundays, where the higher purposes of the Brahma Samaj were discussed and preached.

In 1862 Keshub founded a model educational institution, called Calcutta College. He made a single-handed attempt in establishing this College, Mozocomdar writes, "where the highest training, both intellectual and moral"² was given to the youth of the land. Some of Keshub's friends volunteered to work as honourary teachers. Keshub never believed in combining theological teaching with ordinary education, he considered it adequate to teach the youthful mind the elements of morality and simple natural religion Keshub was a staunch believer in

¹. Ibid, p.61.
². Ibid, p.77.
early moral training and he felt that the power of example exercised by good and spiritually minded teachers go a long way in the development of morality in the children. On these auspicious principles he began to conduct his work in the Calcutta College.

Keshub, throughout his life, had been a great champion of women education. At a very early stage he began to write well-chosen precepts under the heading of Stree Prati Upadesh (Precepts to the wife). After his return from England in 1870 he established the Indian Reform Association for social and moral reformation of the Indians. This Association had five sections namely, Female improvement, Education of the working classes, cheap literature, Temperance and Charity.

Keshub put the education of women in the forefront of his programme of social reform. In 1863 he started an organization for educating female members at home. Another association was started in the same year for publishing books and journals and holding essay competition for the same purpose. Several other associations were established by him for the uplift of women. When in England Keshub was so much impressed by the intelligence and refinement of the women of England that on his return from there, he established the Normal School for Indian Women in February 1871 under the Female Improvement Section of the Indian Reform Association.
To supplement the Normal School, Keshub established another institution for women, called Bama Hitaisini Sabha (Society for the benefit of women) where women read papers and carried on discussions which were presided over by Keshub himself. Mozoomdar tells that "these classes and meetings were not open to the public, they were held in the retirement of the Zenana, the restriction of which Keshub released very gradually".  

Keshub Chandra Sen was very much against the idea of higher education for women. He believed that women should be educated according to the bent of her nature. She should have an artistic, poetic education with a practical training in household duties, elementary science and the laws of sanitation. He could never tolerate in his mind the idea of an artificial, conventional, strong-mannered or strong-minded womanhood. Keshub repudiated the popular custom of the seclusion of women, was against courtship, flirtation and frivolities.

Keshub wanted to spread educational reforms in other directions also. He established an Industrial School and working Men's classes. These reforms, writes Mozoomdar, "filled the Brahma Samaj offices with a new kind of activity and turmoil. The Sawing, Chapping, hammering went on with undiminished vigour mouth after mouth; boxes, chairs

1. Ibid. p.139.
and cabinets sprang into existence. Clerks from government offices, graduates from the neighbouring colleges, Brahma missionaries, headed by Keshub himself took to these occupations with workmanlike avidity, while professional book-binders, tinkers, and carpenters plodded at literary industry, reading primers, and working sums at arithmetic under the feeble light of oil lamps long after nightfall.¹

Keshub founded Albert College, which was affiliated to the Indian Reform Association in 1872. He was most earnest to found a public hall in the heart of Calcutta for "the promotion of literary and social intercourse among all classes of the community".² In 1876 an association styled the Albert Institute was formed and a public hall was built with the following purposes:— (i) Library and newspaper reading, (ii) Lectures and debates, (iii) Soiree and musical entertainments and (iv) Public meetings.

Keshub Chander Sen did a herculean task for the cause of Indian education. Beginning from the Colutolah Evening School, when he was himself a boy, he had successively established many classes and many schools which brought renaissance in Bengal. Keshub never meant to seal the stamp of finality on any one of his reforms; he always intended they should retain their character of progressiveness, and grow with the spirit of the times. His social ideals were

¹. Ibid, p.140.
².
not taken from any foreign usages. He never failed to respect and learn the Christian and European ideals. Perhaps they, unconsciously and largely, modified his principles and conduct, but instinctively and deliberately he was a Hindu, and a sense of nationality characterized his private life and public measures. He was a Hindu reformer in every sense. In Sir William Hunter's words "Keshub Chandra Sen represented, in a special manner, the fusion of European Science with Indian thought. In his effort to reach the intellects and the conscience of his countrymen, he employed every vehicle of instruction, from the ancient Bengali drama to the modern leading article".

The life of Keshub Chandra was full of struggles and his struggles were crowned with success as he was able to advance to the Indians the loftier standards of morality, of religion, and that of freedom of thought. His message helped in the development of the Eastern minds through the science and literature of the West.

Brahmo Samaj movement produced three intellectual giants, the Raja, Devendranath and Keshub. Raja Ram Mohan Roy proclaimed the Unity of the Godhead to a people who believed, against the teachings of their highest scriptures in a multiplicity of Gods. Devendra Nath Tagore proclaimed

---

the freedom of our reason from the bondage of ancient scriptural authority. Keshub Chandra Sen proclaimed the absolute freedom of the individual conscience from the bondage of caste and customs. The Raja's was not, strictly speaking, a movement of active revolt; Devendranath's was really a movement of religious revolt; Keshub Chandra's, representing the third stage in the evolution of the Brahmo Samaj, was a movement of social revolt.

Educational Reform in Bengal after Keshub Chandra Sen:

The leadership of the 19th and early 20th century social and educational reform movement in Bengal was chiefly in the hands of the members of the Brahmo Samaj and in particularly the Sadharan branch, which broke away from Keshub Chandra Sen and tried to maintain the social consciousness and reforming impulse given by Keshub to the Samajists. Anand Mohan Bose, a founding member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, led the new body in several of its social and educational endeavours. Bose and his colleagues, including Dwarkanath Ganguli, Siva Nath Sastri and Durga Mohan Das took a serious interest in education for girls and women. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj added to the number of girls' schools already under Brahmo directions, and daughters of Sadharan Brahmos made up the bulk of the early women graduates from Calcutta University.¹ Boys' schools

were also founded and a Brahmo College, the City College in Calcutta in the 1880’s set a new educational standard by introducing courses in Carpentry and instruction in physical and moral development. Siva Nath Sastri began social work for depressed classes in the 1890’s and in 1908 a Depressed class Mission was started.

The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj’s practical social work was an impressive reminder of the continuing didaction of some Brahmos to the welfare of society. However, the Samaj did not extend its educational drives into social reform organizational work. Brahmos almost ignored those issues which reformers elsewhere considered crucial.

In 1849, "the first school for Hindu girls of the higher castes was founded in Calcutta", called the Hindu Balika Vidyalaya, which owed its origin to Drinkwater Bethune and Pandit Ishwar Chander Vidyasagar, who had to face a great difficulty in securing its first batch of students. The parents who sent their daughters were subjected to persecution and even excommunication. But the Hindu Balika Vidyalaya served as a first foundation stone of a general movement of women’s education. Pandit Vidyasagar, who was inspector of schools with jurisdiction over certain districts, had started a number of girls’ schools and run them at his own expenses.

But in a unique category among Bengali social reforms was Sasipada Banerjee, who regarded himself as a reformed Hindu, and established his own religious body, the Sadharan Dharma Sabha. Sasipada, son of a teacher and educationist, unlike other social reformers before him, came from the middle class family of Barahonagar.

The education of women was little thought of in 1860. But Sasipada first broke down the prejudices of his own wife, whom he had taught to read and write, and proceeded with her assistance to turn his home into a school, where Sasipada educated young girls, including widows. He tried to gain government help for setting up a National School for the education of adult women, but Vidyasagar and Keshub Chandra gave no encouragement to Sasipada being more conservative than him. So in 1873 Sasipada, with his own initiative, saw the normal school project realized with the establishment of the Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya near Calcutta. In 1876 a similar institution, the Banga Mahila Vidyalaya was founded by Durga Mohan Das and Anand Mohan Bose.

By the 1880's in Bengal the education of high-caste girls and women were no longer a novelty, and even Keshub Chandra Sen now supported a normal school.

Simultaneously with his high-caste female education crusade Sasipada strove to ameliorate the condition of the low-caste working people of Calcutta. He set up a night school and working men's club for factory workers in 1860.
In his night schools his attempt was to import education quickly and intelligently. Here he did not neglect in any way the education of the working class women. He gave lantern lectures, with success, in his night schools. He began to publish the 'Bharat Sarjamiva' (Indian Labourer) a monthly illustrated paper, selling for one pice, "said to have been the first labour journal in India". In 1873 Sasipada started a weekly journal publicizing workers grievances.

Sasipada's main preoccupation was to improve the treatment that Hindu society gave to women, and especially to widows. He championed the cause of widow - remarriage, but more far-reading than remarriage was the education for the otherwise statusless widow. Sasipada admitted widows in his schools, but the rehabilitation of the widows as useful members of society did not begin until Sasipada founded the Widow's House in 1887 in Calcutta, the first such institution in India. This institution had a curriculum of home economics in addition to academic subjects and it was conducted along orthodox lines.

By the end of the nineteenth century the social reform movement in Bengal by individual crusaders was virtually at an end and now whole of the Bengali society had become enthusiastic to work for their social rights and educational progress.

---

BOMBAY REFORM MOVEMENT

The Brahm Samaj movement in Calcutta had become a hub of social reform movements for whole of India. Reformers from all parts of the country observed very keenly the progress of the Bengal social reform movements, but Bombay did not lag behind Calcutta in producing young rebels, chiefly the products of the Elphinstone Institution, founded in 1827 to promote English education. Bombay reform movement developed along somewhat different lines from the Calcutta reform movement "partly because the example of the Calcutta Brahmans with their Schism and isolation from the Hindu community served as a warning; partly too because in Bombay's heterogeneous population there were degrees of revolt from tradition and custom and great caution was exercised not to drive away any of them". So in Bombay all the reforms were not from any Samaj. In Bombay city all reforms spread from the students' Literary and Scientific Society which sponsored lectures, many of whose themes were as rebellious as those heard in Bengali student groups. The Bombay social revolt "from those early years took a form which differed from the Bengal revolt. Despite proclamations of rebellion, secrecy in breaking caste laws and an outward guise of conformity

with tradition marked the judiciousness of the Bombay approach to social dissent in contrast to publicity-conscious Bengal, where rebels and orthodox alike conspired to make every social deviation a notorious cause. Bombay's social revolt developed more surely than Bengal's into movements for general social and particular educational reforms.

In the 1830s Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar, assistant professor in the Elphinstone Institution, who was very liberal in his religious attitudes and was completely free from caste and creed prejudices, influenced a large number of students among whom were Dadabhai Naoroji and Sarabjee Shapurjee Bengalee, two men who were to play a great part in educational and social reform in Bombay. It was in 1849 that the students of the Institution, encouraged by their English professors, established the 'students Literary and Scientific Society' where the great interest was provoked by discussions on women's education. In the organization of the Society and in giving effect to the conclusions arrived at by its discussions, Jagan Nath Shankershat and Dadabhai Naoroji played a leading role. And from this Society grew other associations covering the fields of religious reforms, women's education and social reform.

Hindu Missionary Society of Gajanana Rao Vaidya

The Hindu Missionary Society was started by Gajanana Rao Vaidya, a Sanskrit scholar of repute. Though this society

was mainly started for re-admitting converts to Christianity into Hindu Society, but it did not confine its purpose only to that narrow limits. This society did a remarkable work in educational reform also.

Gajananrao set up a primary school and a secondary school teaching up to the fifth English standard with his wife, Kamalabai Vaidya, as the headmistress. In these schools several young teachers gave their services free because the Missionary Society lacked funds. Gajananrao himself taught Sanskrit, while his two brothers helped in teaching mathematics and drawing. In 1910 the schools were able to send few students up for Matriculation examination of Bombay University. Gajananrao's efforts led to the spread of girls education and many of his own students started girls' high schools in Bombay and elsewhere.

Educational Reform in Bombay by other Young Hindu Reformers:

Many other young Hindu reformers worked for the spread of women education in Bombay. In 1909 Nanu Narayan Kothare started the Chandaramji Girls' High School with funds diverted from a religious trust. In 1851 the Students' Society formed a Gujarati Association, the Dnyan Prasarak Mandal which conducted meetings, published tracts and held essay contests. This Mandal did a praise-worthy work for the cause of education in Bombay. Another great worker for the emancipation of women was Karsondas Mulji, a young
Baniya student and later on a reformer, who wrote his famous tract on widow-remarriage, started teaching at the young age of twenty and published his articles on social and educational topics in 'Rast Goftar' (Truth Teller) a Gujarati weekly started by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1851.

Education Reform by Parsis:

On public matters of social concern the Bombay Parsis provided singular leadership for Western India in the 19th and early 20th century, while they maintained the separate identity as a religious group. Being one of the first Indian groups to take advantage of western education and the liberalization of social customs stimulated by association with Europeans, the Parsi community substantially advanced the cause of social reform first, by carrying out reform and welfare schemes for itself, and next by providing leadership for reform movements in the general public. ¹ Especially to foster the cause of women in breaking the hold of narrow orthodoxy over the Parsi community and providing good education to women Parsis did a matchless work. Sorabji Shapurji Bengalli was right no doubt when he claimed in 1868 that "the Parsis may, with proper pride, point to the fact that, of all purely Asiatic communities, they ... may claim honour as the first of Oriental peoples who, by

---

legally defining her individual marital rights, have raised women to a definitively higher social position on the basis of her personal claims as a reasonable and responsible being.¹

The need for the education of women was first felt among the Parsis. Between 1840 and 1855, the Parsi community had gone through all the agonies of adjustment to the time. In 1840, Maneekjee Cursetjee had convulsed the orthodox by openly dining with Europeans during his visit to Europe; in 1852, a Parsi couple had created a sensation by dining out together and visiting the European shops; and in 1855 Dhunjeebhoy Nusservwanjee Cama shook the orthodox by inviting a few English friends to a dinner at his own house. All this constituted no challenge to society because they were not meant as revolts. They were in a sense unavoidable since the English themselves practised them, and the English were in power.² This is an open fact that a minority quickly conforms to the customs of the ruling class and Parsi community being a numerically negligible minority had the choice between ready adoptability or extinction. Moreover, the Parsis being engaged in commerce had to keep good relations with the Europeans. By 1865 mixing publicly with the Europeans had become a normal feature of the Parsi society.

Educational Reform of Parsis by Framji Cowsaje Banajee:

Providing Parsi community English education was quite a different matter. Framji Cowsaje Banajee was a pioneer to this venture. He gave his daughter English education, and also gave in support to his community's institutions, a large amount of his well-earned money. His philanthropies pertain especially to the cause of education - both male and female. Though Framji himself was not highly educated, nor was he imbued with ideas of religious or social reform, but because of having a far-sight in him he took a keen interest in the furtherance of the cause of scientific and general education among the people of his community. Framji had shrewd commonsense, so he appreciated the value of education. Later he was to overcome the prejudice of the community against medical education by providing rooms for students of his own community near the Medical College, where they could undergo the necessary purificatory ceremonies.

Educational Work by other Parsis:

Framji's example of educational work was followed by Maneckjee Cursetjee, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and Cursetjee Nusservanjee Cama. Sir Jamsetjee contributed two lakh of rupees for opening the Government Medical College with which commenced a new era of medical education in Bombay. His philanthropy towards his own community can be understood when he contributed more than four and a half lakh of rupees
for the institutions to provide education to poor Parsi children. Being a lover of Art, Sir Jamsetjee also established an arts school.

Sir Jamsetjee being a pioneer of social and educational reform, sympathised with the movement for the education of girls and the emancipation of womanhood from the tyranny of the social customs of his times and established four girls' schools in Bombay.

Another Parsi, Cursetjee Nusserwanjee Cama was a great crusader for the cause of education. He helped the progressive youngmen of Parsi community to establish three girls' schools. Upto 1864 there was such a great flood of Parsi girls' schools in the Bombay Presidency that in 1865, it had become compulsory for the Parsi community to place all these schools under a single society, the Parsi Girls' School Association, with Framjee Nusserwanjee Patel as the Chairman and Naoroji Ferooroni and Soraaji Shapurji Bengalli as secretaries. A balance between the enthusiasm of the two youngmen and the caution of the Chairman was maintained and the cause of women's education firmly established. The schools were maintained by the splendid generosity of Cursetjee Nusserwanjee Cama and his family who also supported two journals, the "Stri Bodh" for women started in 1857 and the "Rast Goftar" devoted to social reforms launched by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1851.

Another Parsi, Byramjee Jejeebhoy, who was appointed
in 1867 as a Fellow of the Bombay University, had such a great love for the advancement of general and medical education that he lavishly donated for the Government Medical schools at Ahmedabad and Poona, the High School at Thana and the Anglo-Vernacular School at Bhiwandi. But the most notable of his charities was the Byramjee Jejeebhoy Charitable Institution, "whereby he made over the trustees Government paper of the face value of rupees three lakh and fifty thousand for the establishment of an institution for the free education of the children of poor Parsis".\(^1\)

The Trustees started a College of Commerce which was a bold attempt for the spread of Commercial education in Bombay and the credit for that goes to P.M. Wadia, the Managing Trustee who received the whole-hearted support from Jejeebhoy's family.

For an outstanding educational and philanthropic work for Parsi community, the name of Sorajbi Shapurji Bengali outshines all other Parsi reformers. Sorabji was a great reformer and one of the great leaders in the public life of his time, who illumined the historic period of the 19th century. Sorabji stands forth as the pioneer of female education. Sorabji donated Rs.65,000 in the name of his mother and founded Bhicaiji Bengali School which remained a source of good education to the middle and

---

poor classes of the Parsi community. Through the "Rast Goftar" newspaper Sorabji exercised his journalistic powers for carrying on propaganda in favour of educational and social reform among all classes of people.

Sorabji helped Naoroji Furdoonji in the establishment of the "Rahnumaya - Mazdayasnam Sabha" whose purpose was to start an agitation for the annihilation of the old weeds of custom and traditions that had gathered round the Parsi social life. Education for both boys and girls was another object which the Rahnumaya Association had in view. The path for the adoption of its reforms was made smooth by the English and the Vernacular education which had generally spread among the Parsi community in subsequent years.

For the work done for the educational renaissance of the Parsi community the name of Dadabhai Naoroji comes in the fore front. "Dadabhai's life between 1845, when he finished his studies, and 1856, when he left for England, was an eventful one, marked by wonted energy and selfless devotion", to the cause of education. Dadabhai's activities covered a very wide range. With the help of Principal Patton, Dadabhai organized the "students' Literary and Scientific Society". He also contributed diligently to a Journal known as the "Students' Literary Miscellany" started by the students of Elphinstone Institution.

Dadabhai started branches of the students' society under the name of Dhyan Prasarak Mandali for discussions in the Gujarati and Marathi languages and delivered lectures himself under the auspices of that Mandali.

To Dadabhai Bombay owed her first girls' schools, which were opened amidst much opposition. Natesan writes "At one of the meetings of the 'Students' Literary and Scientific Society', a stirring paper on the advantages of female education was read by a gentleman named Behramji Ghandi; and Professor Patton, who presided, urged upon the members, for their active participation. Led by Dadabhai, a number of the members opened classes in various parts of Bombay, and taught them themselves during their spare hours. These classes subsequently developed into the 'Students Literary and Scientific Society's Marathi and Parsi Girls' Schools". Dadabhai was thus one of the pioneers of female education in Bombay. He also took an active part in establishing the Framji Institute in Bombay.

But Dadabhai Naoroji was not the last of all Parsi reformers of the 19th and early 20th century, who worked for the cause of education for the Parsi community, there was a galaxy of reformers, who worked even after Dadabhai had done his remarkable work. The names of Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata, Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, Pherozeshah Mehta, Behramji M. Malabari, Jivanji Jamshedji Modi and many others shine markedly in the

history of Parsi Reformers, who especially worked for the cause of education.

The Prarthana Samaj and Mahadev Govind Ranade:

In 1867 the special genius of the Bombay school of reform brought forth its original contribution to modern Indian theism, the Prarthana (Prayer) Samaj. Its origin was due to the missionary enthusiasm of Keshub Chandra Sen, the Brahmo Samaj leader, who visited Bombay in 1864 and influenced Dr. Atma Ram Pandurang to form the Samaj. Keshub visited Bombay again in 1868 to give the new Samaj his personal encouragements. In principles the Prarthana Samaj very closely resembled Keshub's branch of Brahmo Samaj, but in ideals it very much differed from it. The leaders who infused strength in the Samaj were R.G. Bhandarkar and M.G. Ranade, but it was chiefly Ranade who tried to give the Samaj a more comprehensive meaning and philosophic basis, and his historic essay entitled "Theists' Confession of Faith" was an attempt in that direction.

The main planks of the Prarthana Samaj were theistic worship, educational and social reform. It did not preach any subtle philosophy or any new literature, nor it had much missionary activity. Its main object was the organization of social reform movement, which "laid special

stress on the abandonment of caste, introduction of widow remarriage, encouragement of female education and the abolition of purdah and child marriage".¹

The Prarthana Samaj derives its theism from Hinduism but it does not regard the Vedas as divine or infallible, it completely denies the ideas of Karma, transmigration of soul and the incarnation of God. Prarthana Samaj reveres the Upanishads but stresses the idea of devotion to a personal God, through bhakti. Theism remained for long, for many social reformers, as the only acceptable conception of God, because God as a personal divinity with moral purposes provided a necessary link between religious devotion and worldly righteousness. It was devotionally preached by the Prarthana Samajists to produce in the minds of people an inseparable relationship between reverence for God and reverence for man. But "a rigid exclusion of idolatry and a definite break from the caste system were not regarded as essential conditions of membership",² of the Prarthana Samaj. The Samaj did not set itself apart from Hindu society. This Samaj draws its nourishment to a great extent from the Hindu scriptures, the bhakti poems and stories of Marathi and Gujarati saints.

The predominant attitude before the Prarthana Samaj

¹ Majumdar, R.C. : "British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance" p. 107.
was that religious reform and social and educational reforms could proceed along different courses and at varying rates and no reform can involve a sharp break with the past. Ranade worked not on any single line, but on all lines together — social, religious, educational and political.

The Prarthana Samaj did not spread widely in Bombay, because of its moderate views Prarthana Samaj became very popular in Madras.

Most important achievement of Ranade towards education was that he recognised the necessity of Primary and Secondary education for women in Poona. He privately taught English and Marathi to his illiterate wife, Ramabai and encouraged her to visit the houses of illiterate locality of Poona to convince the women of the need of education of their daughters. In 1881 Kanade organized the Arya Mahila Samaj and in 1884 a school for girls was opened in Poona. Kanade was aware of the educational advancements made by the Parsi community of Bombay and same he wanted to achieve in Poona.

After the death of Kanade in 1901 his educational reform work was taken over by his energetic wife, Ramabai. She started the Hindu Ladies' Social and Literary Club in her own house. She organized free classes to educate married women and widows and to teach them sewing, knitting
and embroidery. She arranged weekly lectures on general subjects. A circle of ladies belonging to different communities and religions gathered round her and Ramabai helped all. In 1903 she became a member of the Lady Dufferin Fund Committee and she persuaded women to learn nursing and midwifery. In her twenty three years of public life Ramabai stressed the need for the education of women and worked tirelessly for the emancipation of women from the ignorance of orthodoxy and prepared them for the changing social conditions of the day.

There were many other educational movements taking place in India in the middle of nineteenth century - Swami Dayananda’s Arya Samaj did influenced the northern India and helped in the growth of a network of educational institutions providing education according to the philosophy of Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda was another great social thinker whose ideas and works influenced the educated middle class society and his approach of solving the social problems and poverty of Indians through education proved a good signal for the mushroom growth of educational institutions throughout the country and another thinker and better known as modernist, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan did a remarkable work for the education and social revolution for the Muslim Community of the country. It was at that time that
Annie Besant appeared on the Indian scene.

In this chapter, the author tried merely to give a general survey of the historical background of Indian Education, its expansion and reforms during the nineteenth century, in order to provide a clear understanding of the educational and social background, when Annie Besant had arrived in India and worked for the cause of national education of people of this country.