CHAPTER III

THE QUEST FOR QUALITY (1901-1921)

The English system of education was fully established in India when the present century dawned. Old controversies had died out and the people had accepted the system. There had taken place an all-round expansion and more and more institutions were coming up.

If the old controversies had been shelved, new issues had begun agitating minds. Under the surface of a general satisfaction a regular storm had been brewing for some years past. Some officials and non-officials alike had begun to question the validity of policies which had been accepted as fundamental and worked upon with zest for more than half a century. The officials were disturbed by the growing political unrest which they attributed exclusively to modern education; Indians, on the other hand, were beginning to be worried by the slow progress of education. Both sides desired a change - although for entirely different reasons and in entirely different directions. So long as the status quo was being maintained, criticism was less active. But as soon as Lord Curzon broached the question of educational reconstruction in 1901, all the underground differences of opinion came to the surface, a storm of controversies burst forth with unprecedented violence resulting in titanic conflicts over certain educational issues.¹

Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India from 1898 to 1905, was a man of great energy, drive and initiative. Like all other departments of administration, Education received his personal attention. Reviewing the state of education in India, he was pained to remark that "for years education in India had been muddling along with no one to look after it at headquarters and there was a deplorable lack of coordination, there was a vagueness as to fundamental principles; slackness had crept in, standards had depreciated and what was wanting was the impulse and movement of a new life."²

With regard to secondary education in particular, the Viceroy was disgusted to find that schools were recognized upon most inadequate tests and incompetent teachers imparted "a course of instruction devoid of life to pupils subjected to a pressure of examinations that encroached upon their out of school hours, and was already beginning to sap the brain power as well as the physical strength of the rising generation."³

Lord Curzon held that the vernaculars, which must for long be the sole instrument for the diffusion of knowledge among all except a small minority of the Indian people were in danger of being neglected in the pursuit of English and in many cases very bad English, for the sake of its mercantile value. He had no objection to English being taught to those qualified to learn it but he asserted that it should rest upon a solid foundation of the indigenous language, for no people would ever use another tongue with advantage that could not just use its own with ease. He was of the opinion

². Lord Curzon in India (A collection of Lord Curzon's speeches on Indian problems) Vol.II. p.66.
³. Ibid., p.69.
that Indian education was far from achieving its true purpose. Boldly did he remark, "I doubt if European Education in India, as we were conducting it, could be described as preparation for living at all, except in the purely materialistic sense, where unhappily it was too true. But of real living, the life of the intellect, the character, the soul, I fear that the glimpses that were obtainable were rare and dim." *

It was this state of affairs that urged Lord Curzon to launch upon a drive for qualitative improvement. He made it clear that it was quality and not quantity, that was important. And his conception of quality was that of a foreigner not fully appreciative of the Indian point of view. In pursuance of his object he called an Educational Conference at Simla to discuss various ways and means to recast education. But the overzealous Viceroy did not invite to the conference any Indian, not even those who were loyal to the British 'Raj' and supported its educational policy, probably because he did not have any regard for the Indian point of view. He also refused to publish the deliberations of the conference as he considered it a private affair. Such an attitude towards a matter so vital for a people cannot be viewed by posterity with any sense of gratification, particularly when Lord Curzon wanted to stream-line quality education, functional for the emerging life of India. The people who were already feeling restive charged the Government with intentions of curbing private enterprise, restricting the expansion of education and bringing it under more Governmental control. In any case this hush-hush approach to education was not realistic.

4. Ibid., pp. 69-.
5. Ibid., p. 71.
The Indian Universities Commission that the Viceroy appointed in 1902 to inquire into the condition and prospects of the universities and make proposals for improving their constitution and working, made two significant recommendations with regard to secondary education. The Commission recommended that the conduct of a School Final or other school examination should be regarded as outside the functions of a university, and secondly, the Matriculation Examination should not be accepted as a preliminary or full test for any post in Government service. In cases where the Matriculation Examination qualified for admission to a professional examination the School Final Examination should be substituted for it.6

This was the first attempt to free the high school from the bondage of the university and make Matriculation a non-essential qualification for entry into Government service. But unfortunately neither the universities gave up conducting the Matriculation Examination nor was a Matriculation Certificate ever under-estimated for the purpose of entry into Government service nor were made available to people other openings besides Government service where educational qualification less than or different from the Matriculation Certificate could have been accepted. Even up to this day the Matriculation Examination in the Punjab is tied to the apron strings of the university for reasons which are certainly not academic but financial.

The Government of India Resolution on Educational Policy issued in 1904 embodied Viceroy's findings and suggestions. It stated that the Government was bound in the interest of the

community to see that the education provided in schools, whether managed by public authority or by private persons, whether aided or not, was sound. It must satisfy that a school was properly constituted, managed and supported; that it taught the proper subjects up to a proper standard; that due provision was made for the instruction, health, recreation and discipline of the pupils; and that the teachers were suitable as regards character, number and qualifications.

The Government also made it clear that it would not abandon its aim of introducing alternative courses for the boys destined for industrial or commercial pursuits; because in that stage of social and industrial development it appeared to them essential to promote diversified type of secondary education, corresponding with the varying needs of practical life. The Government favoured the system of School Leaving Examination to be held at the conclusion of secondary course and hoped that it would not dominate the courses of study but would be adapted to them, and would form the natural culminating point of secondary education; a point that was not to be reached by sudden and spasmodic efforts but by the orderly development of all the faculties of the mind under good and trained teaching.

As for the medium of instruction, the Resolution stated that English as a medium of instruction should be allowed at the minimum age of 13. No scholar in a secondary school should, even then, be allowed to abandon the study of his vernacular, which should be kept up until the end of the school course. If the educated classes neglected the cultivation of their own

languages, these would assuredly sink to the level of mere colloquial dialects possessing no literature worthy of the name. 9

Lord Curzon did not subscribe to the policy of state-withdrawal from the field of secondary education as advocated by the Education Commission of 1882. He proposed that Government must maintain a few institutions in a high state of efficiency as models for private enterprise. He wanted that at least one Government high school should be provided in every district. Through a system of grant-in-aid, better teacher training and strict rules of recognition, he hoped to get better schools. This, indeed, was a spirited attempt to regulate quantity and improve quality. Later events showed that the criticism that Lord Curzon was obstructing the process of expansion was unjustified. The Resolution on Educational Policy provided the provinces broad guide-lines to follow and try to change the education that was devoid of life, into an education that 'prepared for real living, the life of the intellect, the character, the soul' by relating it to the varying needs of practical life and by saving it from the tyranny of examinations.

The Reorganization of the High School Curriculum in the Punjab

As the twentieth century opened, a subject matter programme embracing languages, mathematics, history, geography and physical science had almost become traditional in our high schools. Some schools offered instruction in botany, zoology,

agriculture, drawing and clerical and commercial course. A few more subjects were added to the curriculum during the period from 1901 to 1920. The reorganization of the curriculum at the close of the period marked the end of its early growth and paved the way for its further development.

**Subject offerings.**

In 1906 physiology and hygiene were added to all the three Entrance Courses and drawing to Arts Course only. This increased the number of optional subjects to five each in Arts and Oriental Courses and four in Science Course. Drawing if included in the Oriental Course would have brought it at par with the Arts Course.

The recommendation of the Resolution of 1904 that no scholar in a secondary school should be allowed to abandon the study of his vernacular, which should be kept up until the end of school course did not alter the position of vernaculars in the high school curriculum in the Punjab. The study of a vernacular continued to be optional for the Arts students while the Science students were not required to study it at all. Even before the Resolution, a general Educational Conference held at Lahore on 21st April, 1903, had proposed that the study of a vernacular language should be made compulsory in place of a classical language which should be made optional. But some fifty six years more were to elapse before the study of a vernacular language was made compulsory for all students.

The over-all picture of the subject offerings for the Matriculation Examination and the Clerical and Commercial

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12. The word 'Matriculation' was substituted for 'Entrance' in 1906.
Examination of the Punjab University for 1908 was as under:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oriental Faculty</th>
<th>Matriculation</th>
<th>Clerical and Commercial Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts Faculty</td>
<td>Science Faculty</td>
<td>Compulsory subjects</td>
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<td>Compulsory subjects</td>
<td>Compulsory subjects</td>
<td>Compulsory subjects</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. A Vernacular of India (Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali or Pashto).

2. A Classical Language (Sanskrit or Arabic).


4. History of India from Ancient times to the Mutiny.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optional subjects</th>
<th>Compulsory subjects</th>
<th>Optional subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. The English Language.</td>
<td>2. Agriculture.</td>
<td>2. Native system of Accounts.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. Physiology and Hygiene. 4. Physiology and Hygiene. 4. Physiology and Hygiene.

5. Elements of Physics and Chemistry.

Only one optional subject could be offered.

The Educational Conference held in 1909 debated at length the place of the vernacular language in schools. One significant recommendation of the Conference was that the vernacular should be taught throughout the school course. This was the reiteration of the resolution of the Conference of 1903 that asked for making the study of a vernacular language compulsory but in soft tones. Another Conference held a year after in April, 1910, gave a serious thought to the problem. It was urged by some participants that the inclusion of a vernacular language as a compulsory subject of study at the high stage would overburden the curriculum, and that sufficient knowledge of a vernacular for ordinary purposes could be gained in the middle classes. The general feeling of the Conference, however, was that vernaculars were unduly neglected, and that the knowledge of a vernacular which was already required for translation purposes should be supplemented by reading and composition. The Conference approved the following groups of subjects as alternative courses in the high school. Drawing was to be added where practicable.

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<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. English.</td>
<td>2. English.</td>
<td>2. English.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commercial Arithmetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. History and Geography.</td>
<td>4. History and Geography.</td>
<td>4. History and Commercial Geography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Third Language.</td>
<td>5. Science.</td>
<td>5. Other Commercial subjects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The groups recommended by the Conference were certainly an improvement over the existing programme. Arts and Oriental Courses were merged into one group. The study of a vernacular was made compulsory under all the three groups - Arts, Science and Commercial. The university, however, made no changes in the curriculum.

The Conference regretted the decision of the Punjab University to omit the English history from the Matriculation Course and recommended that a simplified course of English history should be introduced as the Conference considered that the study of the English history was of the greatest educational value. Whether the Conference wanted the children of a subject nation to know the history of their rulers for a better understanding between the two, whether it thought that the study of the English history provided a useful knowledge of the rise of democracy and the parliamentary form of Government in Britain, whether it was convinced that the students would have some intellectual, moral and cultural benefits by its study, the fact remains that the study of a foreign history in detail in a foreign medium at the high school level was not an easy task. The study of the English history and that of India and geography as one subject made it unwieldy and the treatment of the history of India by the teacher under these circumstances must have become sketchy and superficial. It was after ten years in 1919 that the study of the English history was allowed by the University on optional basis.

In 1910 were made some changes in the offerings of the Oriental Course that narrowed down its scope. Elementary Mathematics hitherto a compulsory subject was made optional and

English took its place as a compulsory subject. 'Elements of physics and chemistry' and 'physiology and hygiene' no longer appeared in the list of optional subjects. It was also decided to set question papers in 'history and geography' and 'mathematics' in English although the students were given the option to write answers in English, or in a vernacular language. The only differentiating feature of the Oriental Course thus left was the compulsory study of a vernacular language. The changes were a blow to the already declining course. Right from its inception, the Oriental Entrance Course was against heavy odds. Circumstances were unfavourable for education conducted through vernaculars. The word 'Oriental' too might have created an impression that the Oriental Course meant the learning of classical languages and the study of old texts. The course in any case attracted only a very insignificant number. Table I indicates the comparative figures for the three Courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Oriental Faculty</th>
<th>Arts Faculty</th>
<th>Science Faculty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>Not started.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2741</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3778</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>5676</td>
<td>1892</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I shows that the Oriental Course attracted an extremely negligible number while Arts and Science Courses were registering encouraging enrolment. There were no basic differences
between the Oriental and Arts Courses at this stage and the two should have been amalgamated and the vernacular medium permitted as alternative to English.

Except for doing away with the study of zoology and botany in 1913 and 1915 respectively there were no other exclusions till 1919 when the curriculum was reorganised.

In 1918 the Punjab University appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of the Director of Public Instruction to recommend the introduction of subjects of a practical nature in the curriculum of the high school and modify the Matriculation on the lines of a School Final Examination. The Committee formulated a scheme for such an examination to be called the Matriculation and School Leaving Certificate Examination. With certain modifications this scheme was accepted by the University and the Regulations embodying the scheme were passed in 1919. Though the scheme omitted some of the special features of a good school final scheme, it constituted an examination which in the wider choice of permissible courses was a great advance on the existing Matriculation and above all it established a Board which was to deal solely with the Matriculation Examination and adapt its syllabus to the requirements and capabilities of school boys. 16

The new curriculum that became operative from 1919 (first examination held in 1921) assimilated the three old Oriental, Arts and Science Courses as well as the Clerical and Commercial Course. The following offerings were prescribed by the Punjab University for the Matriculation and School Leaving Certificate Examination:

Compulsory subjects:
1. English (For all candidates).
2. Arithmetic (For non-Matriculation candidates).

Elective subjects:

**Group A:**

3. A Classical Language (Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Latin or Greek).
5. Physics and Chemistry.
6. History and Geography (Any two of (i) Indian History (ii) English History (iii) Geography (iv) Commercial Geography).
7. Agriculture.
8. Physiology and Hygiene.
10. An Indian Vernacular (Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Pashto or Bengali).
11. French.
12. Domestic Economy.

**Group B:**

1. Shorthand and Typewriting.
3. Dictation, Calligraphy and Correspondence.

Every non-Matriculation candidate must take English, arithmetic, and three elective subjects. A candidate for Matriculation must take English, mathematics and two subjects from Group A, of which at least one must be taken from among a classical language, 'physics and chemistry', and 'history and geography'. He may also take one additional subject from Group A, passing in which shall not be necessary for Matriculation. 17

In simplified form the scheme was:

**Subjects for Matriculation**

1. English.
3. Any one of these:
   i. A Classical Language.
   ii. Physics and Chemistry.
   iii. History and Geography.
4. Any one subject from Group A already not taken.
5. Any other subject from Group A at option.

**Subjects for non-Matriculation students**

1. English.
2. Arithmetic.
3-5 Three subjects of Group B.

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A student who passed in English, arithmetic and subjects under Group B (that did not qualify him for Matriculation) could present himself for Matriculation Examination in a subsequent year by taking one or more subjects from Group A. Similarly one who passed the Matriculation could go in for the School Leaving Certificate Examination by taking one or more subjects from Group B. This provision removed the defect of the old regulation under which one who passed the Clerical and Commercial Examination could not enter the University.

The new curriculum afforded to those unable or unwilling to proceed to a university course the opportunity of securing a certificate of general education which would enable them to apply successfully at the end of the school course, for employment in which such education was regarded as a suitable qualification.18 The alternative course, however, catered to the needs of only those youngmen who looked for a career in an office, business firm or a bank.

Under the new curricular arrangement history and geography were hit hard. It was no longer compulsory to study them. Soft options provided in the curriculum were far more tempting than history and geography which unfortunately were not being properly taught. This led to the decline in the study of these subjects.19 The option to choose two subjects out of Indian history, English history, general geography and commercial geography permitted students to take up two histories or two geographies if they so desired. In either case one subject was bound to be neglected.

Mr. H.G. Wyatt, for long associated with Punjab Education analysed

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The whole situation very ably. He wrote:

.... if the History or Geography Group of subjects be taken, the pupil has to study either two separate courses of History (Indian and English) or a course in History and a course in Geography or two courses in Geography. In the two first cases he has to master two separate subjects each carrying only 75 marks in the examination against the single or closely coordinate subjects Physics and Chemistory or a Classical Language carrying 150 marks apiece. He prefers one of the latter. It may be objected that the third choice is open to him, namely the two courses in Geography, General and Commercial, and that these subjects comprise much common ground. This is doubtless true but here we must remember that a main motive in selection - the direct contribution that the study will make to his further university progress is missing for Geography is not a university subject.

And again, even should the candidate still show a predilection for the history or geography group of subjects, the chances favour his taking one of them and not the other - he may well reckon that two histories or two geographies mean less trouble than a course in each.

And are the educationists and the public of the province going to accept this situation with equanimity? Are they going to abandon the coming generation - the educated generation from our secondary schools, which the province will be trusting to guide its fortunes in the future - to ignorance of the history of the country in which they live, and of all that that history can teach, the dependence of man on man, the difficulty and yet the importance of continually struggling forward, the calamities that come of selfishness and prejudice and inertia, the meaning and the duties of citizenship; or to an equal ignorance of the most widely potent of the physical circumstances of the world in which man is alive and active and of man's power over those circumstances, for that is what geography teaches - to exclude such teaching as this from a regular place on the ordinary pupil's time-table, is this or is this not to fail in that duty of preparing the province by all the means in our power to undertake responsibility for its own welfare?

The new scheme widened the range of choice of subjects, a large number of subjects were declared elective subjects presumably to enable a student to select those subjects that would suit his interest and ability. Domestic economy for girls was a fresh addition; for the first time a subject intended to

meet the special needs of girls was included. Whether all the subjects in the high school curriculum should be examination subjects, whether there should be some compulsory subjects and some optional, and whether the number of optional subjects should be small or large have all along been discussed without any definite conclusions. Sir Gooroo Dass Banerjee suggested to the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) that:

the rules allowing a multiplicity of options in the selection of subjects should be abolished and that the subjects of Matriculation Examination should be:

1- English prose and poetry-text-books.
2- The candidate's vernacular with elementary. knowledge of its kindred classical language.
3- Mathematics, including arithmetic (the whole) algebra up to quadratic equations and the progressions, and plane geometry up to properties of similar triangles.
4- Elementary histories of England and India and general geography.
5- Elements of physics and chemistry.

This scheme of subjects, with syllabuses modest and embracing only the broad points of each subject, will afford a common basis of general culture for all students, whatever subsequent careers they may choose. An agriculturist will be none the worse for the little classics he may learn, nor a literary scholar for his little physics and chemistry. 21

The plan of the examination recommended by the Commission had compulsory, optional and non-examination subjects. Students were required to receive a course of instruction in:

(a) Introduction to natural science, including the teaching of hygiene.
(b) History of India. History of the British Empire.
(c) Drawing and manual training and present themselves for examination in the following five subjects, four compulsory and one optional:

Compulsory: (i) Vernacular. (ii) English. (iii) Elementary mathematics. (iv) Geography including physical geography.

The two recommendations have their individual merits and demerits. They are indicative of the trend of thought on the high school curriculum in India in the second decade of this century.

The future needs and the conditions then existing in the high schools of the Punjab necessitated that the framers of the curriculum should have not ignored the claims of modern Indian languages, history, geography and elementary science. It is rather surprising that English alone was considered to be fit for being a compulsory subject. In order to provide practical tinge to the subject curriculum, the Department of Public Instruction started opening manual training centres in high schools in 1919. The scheme, however, covered only a few schools. The progress in this regard was very slow.

Contents of Subjects and Their Teaching

What makes a subject important, interesting and instructive is the content matter selected from it for the purpose of instruction. Making allowances for the effect of good teaching, the outlines of contents of a subject specify the area to be covered, indicate the level of maturity of children and provide broad guide-lines to an average teacher. Important as the account of contents of subject is, till 1904 the detailed spelling out of the items of syllabus was not the practice. In that year the University made beginning with algebra. Its contents were specified. Three years later details of geometry

were provided. In 1908 were given the contents of geography and in 1911 those of history of India. The contents of geography were re-arranged in 1913 and the history course was extended from the period of Lord Dalhousie to that of Lord Dufferin in 1915.

The scope of some other subjects was also detailed during this period. In 1911 the university defined the scope of English grammar and composition and started prescribing text-books in English. The practical work in physics and chemistry was also specified in that year. The contents of drawing and arithmetic were outlined in 1915 and 1918 respectively and the nature of practical work in physiology and hygiene was described in 1917.

Although the work of outlining the contents of subjects was started during the period 1900-1920, the exact scope of the contents of individual subjects was not definitely explained. Nor the contents were put forth as units of learning. The item 'Aurangzeb and Sivaji; rise of Maharathas' occurring in the syllabus of History of India for the Matriculation of 1917, for instance, does not indicate as to how much of Aurangzeb and Sivaji was to be studied. The task of defining the scope of worthwhile knowledge about Aurangzeb and Sivaji was left to the paper-setter. Whatever the paper-setters asked in the question-papers was eventually incorporated in the text-books by their writers or the other way round, the books would guide the paper-setters. Such a situation in the curriculum undermines its utility and ignores the level of maturity and understanding attained by a child at a particular age. The determination, selection and arrangement of contents although made in response to the demands of teachers, educational administrators and others connected with education, were not based upon continuous and
systematic research.

The ill-defined scope of the content matter coupled with the incompetence of a good number of teachers, untrained or inadequately trained, and working under the fear of the Matriculation Examination affected adversely the teaching and learning process. Complaints about ineffective teaching were not uncommon. The Inspectors of Schools reported their dissatisfaction too frequently. One complained that the multiplicity of subjects and length of courses, which in order to be finished, were often badly taught; little time was left to the students to digest what they had learnt. As a result of the undue importance attached to the results of examination, there was a good deal of cramming. The other wrote that the teachers had to teach too much, and so teach it too little. A selection was needed of a course closely related to actual life, between all subjects a closer coordination, a reform of the language teaching, and a prescription in many cases, of better text-books. The third was bitter about the impact of the Matriculation examination on school work. He wrote

the actual work in Punjab schools is very largely, the accumulation in the pupil's mind, of subject matter, whether it be rules of mathematics, facts of history, class-room experiments in science, or the words of a foreign language. And, secondly it is very largely, the accumulation of so much matter in so much time: the course has to be finished. And thirdly, the bulk of the matter is got in the class room from a book; and this class room work, this learning from a book, appears to have no relation to other daily practical duties and problems of life or to any ability in dealing with them. In life you have things, business, men; in school words, study, books.

Studies were too bookish, and too little was done to encourage independent observation. Memory was cultivated more than understanding and practical grasp. Mr. G.A. Wathen, Inspector of Schools, Jullundur Division held that the course for the Matriculation had depressing effect on the teaching. Emphasis was on book teaching rather than subject teaching. Lack of manual training was increasingly felt. Mr. Crosse, the Inspector for the Lahore Division, said that the necessity of a simple curriculum was felt. The other Inspectors also expressed similar views. Mr. Tydeman, for example, was struck by "a somewhat uniformity in method and practice and by a general absence of initiative and originality" among teachers. He commented also on defective organisation, and considered that class work was sometimes most perfunctory and handwriting poor. Mr. Reynell remarked that teaching was too mechanical and handwriting was bad. Mr. Atma Ram considered that, in spite of constant advice, teachers suffered from a want of private study. Sardar Bishan Singh commented on overwork both in Government and in private schools. Sheikh Nur Ilahi wrote of the dullness and insipidity of the work of the teacher who lacked a personal interest in his work and carried it out solely for the sake of the pay which it afforded him.

Medium of Instruction

The foreign medium of education had affected adversely the usefulness of the curriculum. Since 1854 English as medium

of instruction in high schools had been favoured implicitly and explicitly. Being a difficult foreign language, English was not a natural and easy means of acquiring knowledge.

Lord Curzon's Educational Policy stated that "the line of division between the use of the vernacular and of English as a medium of instruction should broadly speaking be drawn at a minimum age of 13." It is rather strange that on the one hand Lord Curzon saw that the premature introduction of the teaching of English as a language and its use as the medium of instruction resulted in cramming and neglect of vernaculars and on the other he would not recommend the bold step of ridding the high school of the tyranny of the foreign medium of instruction. One wonders how under these circumstances vernaculars could get sufficient time and attention so as to become an effective means of bringing European knowledge within the reach of all classes of the people as visualised by the Despatch of 1854.

Before long the disadvantages of imposing English medium became apparent but there came no change in the policy of the Government. As the years rolled by, more and more students entered the high school and went out intellectually maimed. Even those Indians who had acquired marvellous command over the use of the English language and strongly favoured its learning by Indian students criticised the undue importance given to it in the school curriculum.

The greatest national poet of the 20th century Rabindranath Tagore was of strong conviction that the chief medium of instruction in schools (and even in colleges up to the stage of

the university degree) should be the mother tongue. He had four reasons for this belief;

first, because it is through his mother tongue that every man learns the deepest lessons of life; second, because some of those pupils who have a just claim to higher education cannot master the English language; third, because many of those who do acquire English fail to achieve true proficiency in it and in the attempt to learn it spend too large a part of the energy which is indispensable to the growth of the power of independent thought and observation; and fourth, because a training conducted chiefly through the mother tongue would lighten the load of education for girls, whose deeper culture is of high importance to India. 31

Tagore held that the essential things in the culture of the west should be conveyed to the Indian people by means of a diffused education, but that this could only be done through a wider use of the vernacular in school. Dr. Syed Ross Masood, Director of Public Instruction, Hyderabad (Deccan) wrote to the Calcutta University Commission, "India will never develop her real genius and intellectual life till it is made possible for the inhabitants of the country to acquire all varieties of knowledge in the language that comes to them most naturally......" 32

Hundreds of eminent teachers spoke and wrote likewise. The Calcutta University Commission presided over by an English educationist and with several eminent professors of England on it also held that the excessive use of English blunted the edge of what was taught and deadened the learner's mind. 33

32. K.M. Pannikar, op.cit., p.77.
In the Punjab high schools as elsewhere in the country the position with regard to the medium of instruction was not happy. The English medium being concurrent with the vernacular medium in 1871 in the Punjab, by stages came to be the only medium of instruction and examination in 1919. As a matter of fact English was the medium of instruction right from the time of the establishment of the Punjab University, Lahore, since only a few students would take up the Entrance Course of Oriental Faculty permitting vernacular as well as English medium; During the period of twenty years from 1901 to 1920 only 100 students took the Entrance Examination (Oriental Faculty), whereas 81,492 appeared in the Entrance (A.F.) Examination, and 10,403 in the Entrance (Sc.F.) Examination during the same period. 34 The English medium filtered down to the middle classes of the school as well. A general Educational Conference held in the Punjab in 1909 recommended that English should not be a medium of instruction earlier than the high classes. 35 But the members of another conference held a year later in April, 1910 were doubtful as to acceptance of this as an invariable rule. It was argued that the use of English should be encouraged as early as possible, that the introduction of the Direct Method of teaching would render the early use of it easier in future, and that the practice of schools should be uniform at the third middle stage, in view of the high school scholarship examination. The Conference finally decided, "that the vernacular should be the medium of instruction in the first and second middle classes, and English

34. These figures are from the Punjab University (Lahore) Calendars.

in the third middle class and the high department." The Conference made the mistake of being over-optimistic about the success of Direct Method of teaching English and its possibility to improve standard of English in middle schools. Anyway, its recommendation was a sort of compromise. The trend clearly indicated that at least the middle school would soon be free from the burden of a foreign medium. Seven years after in April, 1917 when a general Educational Conference forcefully recommended vernacular as the only medium of instruction and examination at the middle stage, the Department of Public Instruction adopted it. The Conference also recommended to the University the use of the vernacular as an alternative medium at the Matriculation Examination, but a decision on this question was postponed by the University pending the decision about the introduction of a School Final Examination. The period upto 1920, therefore, saw no change in the medium of instruction at the high school level, the demand for it notwithstanding.

Extra-class Activities and Development of Character

There was not evolved any systematic programme of extra-class activities to obviate the defects of the instructional programme. Literary, social and cultural activities were not regular features of the schools during the period between 1900 and 1920. Clubs and societies were not very much heard of in most of the schools. Games and sports, however, were emphasized. Drill and Gymnastics received special encouragement from the authorities. Gradually athletic tournaments and excursions were also included in the physical education programme and infused in schools a new

life. But except drill, all other activities involved a small number of students.

The Government was anxious to see that among children habits of good citizenship were developed through curricular and co-curricular programmes. Qualities like respect for law, loyalty to the Government and spirit of co-operation and mutual help were highly commended and efforts were made to inculcate them among children through moral training. For the development of character among students, discussion of moral subjects, strict control and supervision, increase in the number of trained teachers, introduction of extra-mural activities and establishment of boarding houses were frequently recommended. Books on ethics for direct moral teaching were not favoured. Religious instruction was also not permitted in Government schools. The personal influence of the teacher was considered to be very important for building good habits among children.

Love of religion and love of country, two potent factors for developing moral character, were unfortunately not made use of. Growing communalism in politics for which the Government, no less than some sections of Indian people, was responsible made the Department of Public Instruction cautious in matter of religious instruction. The potent aid of religion was thus denied in education, for the English had been apt to look upon religion in India somewhat like a powder magazine, to be approached cautiously.37

Complete absence of religious instruction, depreciation of India's cultural heritage and no appreciable effort for the

development of patriotic sentiment were largely responsible for not developing character and moral strength among the mass of students. There was lack of emphasis on communal harmony and national and emotional integration, and students were provided fewer chances for community service. Most of the schools had dull and unattractive physical surroundings and were without basic amenities for physical and moral growth. And this failure of the high school programme in building up in pupils right moral convictions was a point of vehement criticism both by Indian people and many Englishmen. Mayhew, for long associated with Indian Education, wrote, "The moral progress of a nation cut off from and ignorant of its cultural and spiritual antecedents is inconceivable..." 38

Practical and Vocational Bias

The Resolution on Indian Educational Policy (1904) affirmed faith in the recommendation of the Education Commission (1882) to introduce alternative courses at the high school stage and stated, "In the present stage of social and industrial development it appears to them essential to promote diversified types of secondary education, corresponding with the varying needs of practical life." 39 No further advancement, however, was made over what the different provinces had done to implement the recommendations of the Education Commission. The Government Resolution on Educational Policy of 1913 made no boast of Government effort for introducing diversified courses. In soft tone the Resolution stated that as the trained teachers became available the scheme of secondary education for the average

39. Indian Educational Policy, 1904. op.cit.,p.23.
scholar should steadily be diverted to more practical ends, e.g., by means of manual training, gardening, out-door observation, practical teaching of geography, school excursions, organised tours of instruction, etc.40

The object of the bifurcation scheme recommended by the Indian Education Commission was to train up young men and women for trade, commerce, industry, etc. with a view to diverting the flood of candidates that rushed to the universities. But the alternative examinations provided in the period 1902 to 1921 were more in the nature of attempts either at the reform of the examination system or at the enrichment of the secondary course by providing a number of optional subjects. They did not succeed in providing vocational or pre-vocational courses; nor did they divert students into various walks of life.41

To adjust vocational courses in general secondary schools was no easy a task. Even in England the idea had not won favour. The Board of Education which issued its first regulations in 1904 defined a secondary school as that which offered to its scholars upto and beyond the age of sixteen 'a good general education, physical, mental and moral'. It required a four-year course which embraced English language and literature, geography, history, at least one language other than English, mathematics, science and drawing together with manual work, physical exercises and for girls, house wifery. The curriculum of the English secondary school was thus determined by the aims and purposes of a general liberal education, to the exclusion of any consideration

of vocational preparation. Commenting on the Regulations thirty four years later, the Spens Committee (1938) remarked that the Regulations were based wholly on the traditions of the Grammar Schools and Public Schools. The concept of general education underlying these Regulations was divorced from the idea of technical or quasi-technical education. An unreal and unnecessary division was introduced between secondary and technical education.42

In their reports for 1912-13 and 1913-14 the Board of Education in England stated that their Regulations for Secondary Schools aimed at encouraging considerable variation in the curriculum according to local circumstances and the legitimate aims of particular schools. The Board further added that such variation might be effected by means of specialised work in the higher courses or by means of a definite bias, rural, industrial or commercial given to the whole course. At the same time care must be taken to prevent specialisation among pupils who had not a sound foundation of general education or such specialisation as would encroach upon work proper to Technical Schools. All school work might in some sense be regarded as vocational, since it should be planned with due regard to the probable future of the pupils.43

After the war there started rethinking on the curriculum of the English secondary school. Claims of science were pressed. Representatives of sciences and humanities who met in a Conference passed the following resolutions:

1- The first object in education is the training of human beings in mind and character, as citizens of a free country, and any technical preparation of boys and

43. Ibid., p.75.
girls for a particular profession, occupation, or work must be consistent with this principle.

2- ... that the curriculum up to and about the age of sixteen should be general and not specialized; and in this curriculum there should be integrally represented English (language and literature), languages and literatures other than English, history, geography, mathematics, natural sciences, art, and manual training.

3- ... that both natural science and literary subjects should be taught to all students below the age of sixteen.

4- In the case of students who stay at school beyond the age of sixteen, specialization should be gradual and not complete. 44

The institution of the first school examination in 1917 had the effect of stereotyping and narrowing the curriculum. The examination checked effectively any tendency to develop special courses in the main portions of Secondary Schools for pupils below the age of sixteen. 45 "It is significant", remarks Dent, "that it was the general public which was very largely responsible for ensuring that the curriculum should be dominated by university requirements." 46 The public, and especially the business world, insisted on Matriculation Certificate for the recruits to black-coated occupations.

The fundamental principle of the curriculum of secondary schools in England during this period was that the specialisation should follow a good foundation of general education. Similar views were expressed by English educationists working at that time in India, industrially backward. Mayhew said that in actual fact the high schools and courses suffered, not for want of vocational training, but from their concentration on training

of a definitely vocational but very limited type. Essentially practical and utilitarian, they had aimed at the production of government officials, lawyers, doctors and commercial clerks and within this narrow range, they had succeeded remarkably well. Where they had failed almost completely was on the cultural side." 47 Supporting official point of view Mayhew stated that there was a real determination in those responsible for general education to give students a bent for industrial and commercial life and fit them for the special training whether in special institutions or in factory or office which such life demanded. 48 Providing vocational courses in high schools, Mayhew held, was inconsistent with the true purpose of secondary education and expenditure on them was a profitable investment only when there was a sound basis of general education, expert guidance, and a demand for skilled labour, or supervision by an established industry. 49

The pace at which the industrial development was going on during the first two decades of the century did not warrant any elaborate programme of vocational education in high schools. Even if there had been rapid industrial progress, the traditions of the British educational system and the lack of educational facilities in India would have rendered it difficult to provide for vocational or technical education under the same roof.

The chances of employment for the educated youth under the Government were not yet exhausted. Those who acquired knowledge of English found themselves fixed up somewhere or the

48. Ibid., p.160.
49. Ibid., p.285.
other. There was, as a result, no keen demand for vocational training. A number of eminent educationists of Bengal who expressed their views about secondary education to the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) asked for practical bias in school education and not for the introduction of technical and vocational courses. The criticism directed against high school education that it was exclusively literary and stunted the growth of children could have been met by making provision for manual and physical training, greater amount of practical work in various subjects, field trips, social service programmes, etc. Such a change would have created in the youth a sense of dignity of labour and kept them tied to their social moorings. The acceptance of the recommendation of the Calcutta University Commission for making provision for manual training, drawing and science for all as non-examination courses (besides keeping science as an elective subject) would have gone a long way in improving the quality of the school education. Improvement of content matter, better and adequate training of teachers, and the reform of examination system which was dominating more and more the high school education would have set at rest the public criticism of the schools.

The Clerical and Commercial Course in the Punjab intended to prepare young men for careers in office and commercial establishments did not make a headway nor did the three Entrance courses serve any great purpose. Eventually all the four were combined into one Course - Matriculation and School Leaving Certificate Course. But the division between the Matriculation and the School Leaving Certificate Course still existed, each leading to a separate examination and certificate.
The School Leaving Certificate Course was never popular but it lingered on for quite a long time. The best arrangement would have been the single Matriculation Course with provision for commercial and other possible non-academic courses as electives besides the few quite essential compulsory subjects.

The inclusion of practical subjects like agriculture and drawing and later on domestic economy led to the enrichment and breadth of the curriculum. Manual training, although introduced very late during the period, was confined to just a few schools.

Quality Still Far

Lord Curzon's crushing criticism of the educational system and his plans for a relentless drive for improvement inspired a hope in some quarters that things would have a turn for the good. But the changes that came in the wake of Curzon's reformative programme brought about only a certain amount of organizational efficiency. In the Punjab as in other provinces of the country, the Departments of Education enforced new rules of recognition of secondary schools. The Punjab University Senate was reconstituted in 1904-05. In the same year the Department of Public Instruction brought 27 Board Secondary Schools under its direct control in order to provide in each district: a model school for the schools of local bodies and private enterprise.50 There was, however, no substantial improvement in quality. Education never came to be a preparation for living and the glimpses of real living, the life of the intellect, the character, the soul, which the Governor-General found rare and dim never got common and bright.

Lord Curzon wanted to see the intellect, the character and the soul of the Indian youth developed. But unfortunately he did not explain his aims of education in terms of national ideals and aspirations of the people of India. He wanted Indians to be good people to be governed by the English. As a result education in India continued to remain without ideals capable of guiding and directing educational effort. Naturally the volume of criticism of the British educational system in India increased. Lala Hardyal, a revolutionary leader of the Punjab and a man of great intellectual powers, in a series of articles contributed by him to papers in 1908, criticised bitterly the educational system. He wrote that an ideal system of education should satisfy the following conditions:—

"i. It must awaken in boys sense of their duty and humanity and the nation;
ii. it must form the national type of character;
iii. it must accustom boys to the national modes of life and thought which are around them;
iv. it must make them fit for some form of activity, by which they should develop their nation and carry out their Dharma." 51

Judged by these objects, Hardyal found that the educational system established by the British Government was unsound, abnormal and pernicious in all its ramifications and the British educational policy was killing out the soul of the nation. The whole machinery of schools and colleges was one huge octopus which was sucking out the moral life blood of the nation. It was crushing out the heart and conscience of the middle and upper classes. The young men were slowly dying a death, far more dreadful than mere physical dissolution, a death of all that was

51. Hardyal, Our Educational Problem, 1922. p.6.
noble and praiseworthy in their character and habits, a social, moral and intellectual death. Voicing similar feelings, K.M. Panikar, a historian, diplomat and statesman of repute observed that the main defect of the system was that its social ideals were entirely different from and to a very great extent hostile to the Indian conditions. From 1834 its tendency had been to become progressively unreal, so that it had come to be a machinery which stunted children's growth, a mass of un-reality which expressed no meaning and was capable of expressing none, a system which tortured children by its elaboration and killed their mind and soul by its barrenness.

The educational system in India was largely an imitation of other educational systems. Mere imitation was a poor ideal. Conditions were different and it was little likely that transplanted systems would be really good.

The vagueness of the aim of English education in India was deplored by Sir Asutosh Chander in his reply to the questionnaire of the Calcutta University Commission. He held that the system was without an ideal or a definite ultimate aim. The country wanted education to enable the people to stand on their own legs in every respect, to develop their work-power and character power, to give true all-round strength. A system originally meant for obtaining efficient clerks and then to a limited extent for vocational work, was failing to meet the progressive needs of the people.

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In the absence of national ideals, there could hardly be any national bias in the high school curriculum. Subjects and courses not intimately related to life can never be appropriate means of quality education.

Curzon's quest for quality education of his conception did not end in success. Nevertheless, it served a useful purpose. It made the officials as well as the intelligentsia conscious of the draw-backs of the educational system. The more and more the system got firmly entrenched, the more obvious appeared its weakness that aroused public disgust and criticism which are bases for further quest for improvement. The educational and political policies of the Government gave rise to such a dissatisfaction that the educational system had to face a challenge in the form of National Education Movement right from the beginning of the century.