CONCLUSION

With the introduction and extension of Western type of education in the Punjab, the indigenous educational system began to recede into oblivion. Hundreds of indigenous schools folded up and gave way to the new schools established by the government during the period under study. But the fact remains that the English onslaught could not entirely wipe out the indigenous school system. The Mahajani schools and the indigenous medical system stood as pillars among the ruins. These systems were destined to last well into the 20th century. The best course for the government could have been the adoption and nourishment of the indigenous schools but that was not to be. The government, seeing qualitatively little in the old system, neglected it, and a great opportunity to educate the masses was, thus, lost. The government on its part had expressed its anxiety to educate the great mass of the people in the Wood's Despatch of 1854; Lord Stanley's Despatch of 7th April, 1859 and in the recommendation of the Indian Education Commission of 1882. But despite these declarations, the progress of education in the Punjab continued to be slow. The policy of providing education to the great mass of the people was not strictly adhered to and the state's efforts were mainly directed to the instruction of the natives hailing from the higher strata of society. The ghost of the impracticable 'Downward Filtration Theory' continued to haunt the minds of those who
were at the helm of the educational affairs. Moreover, it was the secondary rather than the primary education that drained the sources and energies of the Education Department. The government faltered in not making the primary education compulsory. More than that the government neither had the resources nor the will to carry out all by itself the education of such a vast province as the Punjab. It was assumed in 1854-55 that if one-sixteenth of the population were to be given education at the lowest possible cost of Rs. 3/- per pupil, the aggregate expenditure required would have been Rs. 24 lakhs per annum, which was considered beyond the means of the government. The government spent a paltry amount of rupees one and a half lakhs in round figures and the rest of one and a half lakhs was contributed by the people in 1856-57. Thus, it was the government's inability to provide from the imperial funds that the primary education came to be dependent upon the Local Cess Funds. This eventually led to the transfer of primary education to the local bodies. The task of forming the local committees was entrusted to the district officials and the Education Department. The resources of these local bodies continued to be meagre and they were given absolutely inadequate grant-in-aid. Throughout the period under study these bodies continued to face financial difficulties. Thus, the experiment failed to establish the primary education on a sound footing. As a result, the number of scholars attending
primary schools for boys in the Punjab in 1880-81 was still less than one-half per cent of the population.

The success at the secondary school education also fell woefully short of expectations. In 1903-04, only one boy in every 128.5 boys of school-going age was studying in the Anglo-Vernacular schools. The proportion for the Vernacular schools was far dismal, being one boy in every 386.8 boys of school-going age. The same was true of university education. Although the college education advanced rapidly during the last decade of the period under study, yet the number of students graduating from the Punjab was very small.

As a whole, literacy in the Punjab during the period under study remained very low. There were only 63 literate males out of 1,000 in 1881 and 74 out of 1,000 in 1891. The figures for the literate females were extremely negligible, being 2 out of 1,000 in 1881 and 3 out of 1,000 in 1891. In 1901, only 6.4 per cent of the males and 3 per cent of the females were literate in the Punjab. It was indeed at a snail's pace that education continued to languish for a period of half a century. The figures reflect the failure of the British educational policy. The reasons being the blind neglect of the indigenous schools; inadequate financing; and the faulty curricula.
The system applied by the British was circumscribed within the trading castes of the Khatris, Banias and Jains, etc. They too were attracted to it more because of the lure of employment than for the real love of learning. The bulk of the people who were agriculturists and menials did not find it profitable, as it was little calculated to help them in their professions. It was suitable only for those who sought government and clerical jobs. The government on its part did try to popularise education among the agriculturists by opening Zamindari schools. The experiment, however, did not click and the great mass of the people, thus, remained indifferent to the government system. This factor was mainly responsible for the slow progress of education during the period under study. Again, the educational disparity became a bone of contention between the city elite and rural classes. The agriculturists, in particular, began to resent the exclusive control of government jobs and political life by the urban classes. In order to safeguard their interests, the rural classes began to ask for reservation. Much of the struggle between the agricultural classes originated from this situation. But despite slow progress of the Western education, it was instrumental in the emergence of an educated elite in the Punjab. This class of professionals, hailing from the towns and cities of the Punjab and belonging to the three leading
denominations of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs, became the representatives of the new movements. Men like Khem Singh, Dayal Singh Majithia, R.B. Mul Raj and Sir Ganga Ram, played a significant role in the socio-religious and political life of the province.

The Western education and thought kindled a spirit of enquiry into age-old religious practices and a fervour for socio-religious reform movements among the people of the Punjab during the second half of the 19th century. The contribution of these movements, for their wider impact, can be seen in the light of the following developments:

i) Fillip given to the development of the Native Educational Enterprise;

ii) Weakening of the caste system;

iii) Rise of communalism; and

iv) Amelioration in the position of women.

The movements like Arya Samaj, Dev Samaj, and Sanatan Dharam among the Hindus; and the Singh Sabha among the Sikhs, more particularly, the Chief Khalsa Diwan among the Sikhs, did commendable service in the field of education. These movements, in fact, pioneered the native educational enterprise in the province. In no time, the D.A.V. College, Lahore, started by the Arya Samaj in 1888 and the Khalsa College, Amritsar, established by the Singh Sabha in 1892, became the premier educational institutions. Islamia College, Lahore followed a little later. These institutions
could vie with the best institutions of the time. The students graduating from these colleges played a significant role in the social and political life of the Punjab.

The rise of Sikhism had lessened the severity of the caste system in the Punjab to a marked degree. The Punjabi society in the 19th century Punjab was a multi-unit society in which each caste had its functional place. And each caste had its own 'biradari'. The caste-bonds were tightly held intact by the 'biradari system'. The growth of Western education, introduction of the British legal system and the movement away from home, considerably weakened the social importance of the 'biradaris'. The weakening of the 'biradari system' meant in time the weakening of the caste system. Once away from home, the 'biradari' ceased to have the same hold on an individual. In fact, bonds of education and rapid professionalisation, supplanted the old caste bonds and a new society emerged in the Punjab whose members were cutting through the age old and traditional patterns. The new reform movements like Arya Samaj replaced the old 'biradaris'. And for the first time during the period under study, the heavens were kind to the out-caste since the times of Manu. In the first place the British school system was open to all, irrespective of the caste, colour and creed. The new education gave the low castes some respectability in the society. Secondly, the proselytizing success of the
missionaries among the depressed classes of 'chuhras' and 'chamars' drew the attention of the Arya Samaj to better the lot of these sections of the society. As a result, the doors of the Arya Samaj were thrown open to them. The Aryas even ate food and began mixing with them freely. This further created a furor among the orthodox Punjabi society. This was indeed a revolutionary step, for no one, with the exception of Guru Nanak, had dared it since the time of Buddha.

The negative aspect of the period under review was the rise of communalism. It was a new development in the Punjab. During the entire course of its history communal feelings were never so strong. Prior to Ranjit Singh's reign, the law of history prevailed, where rulers religion was dominant and that of the ruled somewhat subdued. Ranjit Singh was secular. But in the era of the British rule the players wrestled with an equal strength. The British presence was always there to protect the offending parties. The freedom of press gave vent to the communal feelings. The result was the religious controversy of the last two decades of the period under study. For the first time, due to mutual suspicion and communal rivalry a religious schism began in the Punjab. And for the first time the theory that Sikhism was distinct from Hinduism began to be echoed in the Punjab.
The people under the impact of new education and thought began to look at the lot of the women from a different angle. The women after about two millennia of neglect began to receive some attention and respectability. Now the social evils of child infanticide and woman baiting were being vehemently opposed. The movements like Arya Samaj began to perform the widow remarriages. Thus, the period under study gave a new ray of hope in the amelioration of the position of the women.

Surinder Nath Banerjee's visit to the Punjab in 1878 initiated the Punjabis into politics when the Lahore Chapter of the Indian Association was formed. This was the time when Arya Samaj and other socio-religious reform movements were being founded in the Punjab. As the number of the Punjabis in the professions and services grew, they began to form their own clubs. In the formation and organisation of these clubs the Bengali and missionary influence was manifest. The focus of the deliberations at these clubs, sabhas and societies was destined to experience a shift from socio-religious to the political life of the province. But that was to come later. For the most part of the period under study the Punjabis looked upon the British with gratitude. This earlier generation had accepted their inferior position in the services ungrudgingly. Initiative in those years lay with the British who were engaged in the development of the
country and the services and it was natural that as teachers and leaders they held superior positions. In fact, in the beginning they welcomed the British Raj with devotional praise. But that was not going to last until eternity. As the Punjabis became proficient as teachers, engineers, lawyers and doctors, the superior position of the British began to be questioned. By the closing years of the 19th century the Punjabis began to look upon peace under the British as the peace of slavery. This change was the result of the process of education and the spread of new ideas. The Arya Samaj and other reform movements, whose cadres were newly educated youth, infused a spirit of nationalism and self respect among the Punjabis. This was also the time when the press in the Punjab had gained maturity. Moharrum Ali Chishti of Rafiq-i-Hind, Lahore, Mehbub Alam of Paisa Akhbar, Lahore; Dina Nath of Hindustan; Bankey Dayal of Jhang Sayal, Gujranwala; Munshi Ram of Arya Patrika, Lahore; Pandit Kanhiya Lal Alakhndhari of Nit Parkash; and Gurmukh Singh of Gurmukhi Akhbar and Khalsa Akhbar, Lahore pioneered the Vernacular journalism in the Punjab. The publication of The Tribune in February, 1881, was a turning point in the history of journalism in the Punjab. The newly educated elite became obsessed with this newspaper. In the beginning, this newspaper showed unswerving loyalty towards the rulers but soon it became an uncompromising critic of the British rule.
This was also the trend of the Vernacular press of the time. These newspapers brought the national scenario to the doorsteps of the Punjabis. What was Amrit Bazar Patrika to the Bengalis, The Hindu to the Madrasis, The Tribune was to the Punjabis. The attention of the educated youth was undergoing a shift from social to the political life of the province. They had now no illusions about the blessings of the British Raj. They began to attribute the slow progress of education and the growing poverty to the wrong policies of the British. The exclusive control of the higher posts by the British also came to be resented. The political questions began to agitate the minds of the educated youth. If Anjuman-i-Punjab provided the educational platform, the Lahore Indian Association provided the political platform to the Punjabis.

The only public talks the Punjabis were used to hear were the religious discourses, the sermons of the Arya Samaj and the Kathas etc. To them the political lectures were quite a new phenomenon. The speeches of the visitors like Surinder Nath Bannerji and others infused in them a new political spirit. In the meantime in 1885, the Indian National Congress had been established at Bombay. The Punjabis began to fill its ranks enthusiastically. They were mostly lawyers, teachers and journalists. Dayal Singh Majithia, Lala Murli Dhar, Ambala; Bakhshi Jaishie Ram,
Nurpur; Lala Sukh Dayal, Dharamshala; Lala Lal Chand, Lala Duni Chand, Lahore; Harkishan Lal, Dera Gazi Khan; Lala Lajpat Rai, Dhudike; and among the Muslims, journalists like Hyder Raja, Muharram Ali Chishti and Mehbub Alam were some of the earliest Congressmen of the Punjab. They were instrumental in convening for the first time an annual session of the Congress to the Punjab in 1893. Subsequently, the provincial conferences of the Congress were held in 1895, 1896 and 1898 at Lahore, Amritsar and Amabala, respectively.

At the close of this study, Ajit Singh was destined to shine on the political horizon of the Punjab. He alongwith Amba Prashad Sufi and Lal Chand Falak formed the Anjuman-i-Mehbuban-i-Wattan, known as Bharat Mata Society. At the turn of the century the Punjab politics had come of an age. It showed its mettle in assailing the Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1900; in opposing the educational policies of Lord Curzon, specially the University Act of 1904, and in the agrarian disturbances of 1907. The Punjab was to become the focus of the entire country after the Jallianwala massacre in 1919. It were the western educated elite, i.e. teachers, lawyers and journalists who formed the nucleus of the Punjab politics. The British had envisaged the creation of this class as, "a class of Indians in blood and colour but English in tastes", to strengthen their rule in India. But ironically this was the class which led India's struggle for freedom.
In Punjab, too, as in other provinces, educationally the Muslims remained backward when compared with the Hindus. The reason that the fear of conversion to Christianity held the Muslims back from English education is not the whole truth. That the Hindus and the Sikhs also had the same apprehensions, is amply proved by the mission records. The most probable reason for their educational backwardness lay in their occupational background. The higher education, which was key to the government jobs, was concentrated in the larger towns and cities of the Punjab. The Muslims living in these towns belonged to artisan class and were generally poor. They barely earned their daily bread. They could neither fancy English education nor had the means to afford it. Secondly, the majority of the Muslims were agriculturists who seeing little in education naturally held aloof. The initiative lay with the Hindus, especially the trading castes of the Khatris, Banias and Jains, who equipped with the English education, grabbed the majority of government jobs. The Sikhs, on the other hand, were filling army ranks in large numbers. The Muslims were, thus, left high and dry. They began to resent the exclusive control of the government and army posts by the Hindus and the Sikhs, respectively. This disparity in holding the posts and positions resulted in the souring of Hindu-Muslim relations in the closing phase of this study. Soon, they fell poles
apart. In the next century this disparity was destined to be widened. While the creation of Pakistan was too complex a process to be attributed to any single factor but that the educational backwardness of the Muslims and their eventual loss of post and position to the Hindus was one of the chief reasons, could not be denied.

It is also interesting to note that the impact of western education on the Muslims was not of the same degree as it was on the Hindus. Whereas, the impact of western education produced a series of movements like Arya Samaj, Dev Samaj, and Sanatan Dharam among the Hindus and Singh Sabha among the Sikhs, which opened the Punjabi society to modern education, did not generate similar movements among the Muslims of the Punjab. The Ahmadiya movement hardly opened any educational institution during the period under study while Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore and Anjuman-i-Islamiya, Amritsar did open a college and school, respectively. Their educational achievement was less significant than that of Arya Samaj and other similar movements in the Punjab.

In the overall analysis, the British educational policy failed to educate the great mass of the people. The castes of Khatris, Banias and Jains, living in the towns and the cities, were its real beneficiaries and finally became the foremost critics of the British rule in India.
Although the western educational impact was instrumental in bringing about sweeping changes in the society, yet it failed to check the religious rivalaries and communal hatred which was destined to divide the Punjab about half a century later. Although the British educational policy was found wanting in many respects, i.e. neglect of the indigenous system of education; total dependence on English model, etc. yet it is wrong to conclude that it achieved nothing worthwhile. In fact, it did a lot in changing the socio-religious and political scenario in the Punjab. In the final analysis the British must be given due credit for awakening the Punjabi society from the medieval sleep to the dawn of modernism.