

## CHAPTER II

### Education in British India up to 1947

An attempt is made in this chapter to highlight the salient features of the educational system in British India along with the traditional systems of education before the arrival of the westerners in this vast sub-continent, though the doctoral study is a historical survey of the French educational pattern in French Pondicherry. Before going into the details, it is necessary to delve briefly into the traditional systems of education which prevailed in India before the arrival of the Europeans here.

#### I. Indigenous Systems of Education

##### 1. Vedic System

Religion was the mainspring of activities in ancient India. It was of an all absorbing interest that embraced not only prayer and worship but philosophy, morality, law and government as well. Religion saturated educational ideas and the study of vedic literature was indispensable to higher castes. The stages of instruction were very well defined. During the first period, the child received elementary education at home. The beginning of secondary education and formal schooling was marked by a ritual known as the *upanayana*, or thread ceremony which was restricted only to boys. It was more or less compulsory for boys of the three higher castes. The Brahmin boys had this ceremony at the age of eight, the Kshatriya boys at the age of 10, and the Vaisya boys at the age of 12 years respectively. The boy would leave his father's house and enter his preceptor's *āśrama*, or home, situated amid sylvan surroundings. The *ācārya* would treat him as his own child,

give him free education, and not charge anything for his boarding and lodging. The pupil had to tend the sacrificial fires, do the household work of his preceptor, and look after his cattle.

The study at this stage consisted of the recitation of the Vedic *mantras*, or hymns and the auxiliary sciences-phonetics, the rules for the performance of the sacrifices, grammar, astronomy, prosody, and etymology. The character of education, however, differed according to the needs of the caste. For a child of the priestly class, there was a definite syllabus of studies. The *trividya* or the knowledge of the three Vedas i.e., the most ancient of Hindu scriptures was obligatory for him. During the whole course at school, as at college, the student had to observe *brahmacharya*, viz., wearing a simple dress, living on plain food, using a hard bed, and leading a celibate life.

The period of studentship normally extended to 12 years. For those who wanted to continue their studies, there was no age limit. After finishing their education at an *āśrama*, or forest school, they would join a higher centre of learning or a university presided over by a *kulapati* (a founder of a school of thought). Advanced students would also improve their knowledge by taking part in philosophical discussions at a *parishad*, or academy. Education was not denied to women, but normally girls were instructed at home.

## **2. Brahmanasanghas**

Besides these schools of instructions, there were special institutions for the promotion of advanced study and research called brahmanasanghas. Academies of learned men were called *parishads* and Sanskrit was the vehicle of the highest thought. Learning was promoted by discussions in public meetings which was a

regular feature of the rural life. These meetings were addressed by the wandering scholars called *carakas* who toured the country to deliver public discourses and invite discussions.<sup>1</sup>

There are references in *upanishads* about scholars who travelled across the country to contact learned men. Conferences were held by distinguished scholars for the promotion of the spread of knowledge and extension of education. Philosophical conferences were also held patronised by the scholars. The earliest literary congress of the world was that of the philosophical congress convened by King Janaka of Videha at his court under the direction of the master philosopher Yaganavalkya.<sup>2</sup> Lady philosophers like Gargi, Maithreyi and Uddakala Aruni had participated in these religious discussions which made it clear that education of women had never suffered any disabilities.<sup>3</sup>

Based upon the existing indigenous instructions, the Indian efforts to stimulate education was most successful. But it is to be noted that this advanced instruction was for the higher classes. For the lower castes, village schools known as *pātasālais* were scattered over the countryside in which a rudimentary education was given to the children of the trading classes, the petty land holders and the well-to-do cultivators.

In many villages, in Bengal and other parts of India, these schools are still to be seen working. Seated under a tree or in the *verāndah* of a hut, the children learned to trace the letters of the alphabets with their fingers in the sand or recite in monotonous tones the spelling or a multiplication table. Simple mensuration and accounts and the writing of a letter were the highest accomplishments at which this primitive course of education had aimed at.

### **3. Buddhist System**

By the end of the sixth century B.C, the complexity of the Vedic religion gave way to the rise of two new religions, viz., Buddhism and Jainism which challenged the authority of the Brahmanical system of worship. They talked through the common language of the people and gave education to all, irrespective of caste, creed or sex. Buddhism also introduced the monastic system of education through the monasteries attached to Buddhist temples which served the double purpose of imparting education and of training persons for priesthood. A monastery, however gave education only to those who were its members. It did not admit day scholars and thus did not cater to the needs of the entire population.

During the subsequent periods under the imperial monarchs of ancient India, educational institutions flourished considerably. Both Buddhist and Vedic systems of education had remarkable progress during this time. This state of affairs continued up to the last Hindu dynasty of Harsha in northern India after which the country had passed into the hands of the Mohammadans who had their sway over the country in course of time.

### **4. Muhammadan System**

In the distant past, higher education of the Muhammadans was in the hands of the learned men who devoted themselves to the instruction of the youth. Schools were attached to mosques and shrines supported by state grants, in cash or in kind or by private liberality. The course of education in Muhammadan learning included grammar, rhetoric, logic, theology, metaphysics, literature, jurisprudence and science. Individual instructors of merit were also aided by the state. Landholders and the nobles competed with each other in supporting scholars of repute. In course of time, the classes of the learned instructors were replaced by *Madrasāhs* or col-

leges of the modern type founded by liberality of pious persons.

Early Muslim education emphasized practical studies, such as the application of technological expertise to the development of irrigation systems, architectural innovations, textiles, iron and steel products, earthenware, and leather products, the manufacture of paper and gunpowder, the advancement of commerce, and the maintenance of a merchant marine.

The basic feature of the Muslim education was that it was traditional in spirit and theological in content with the main purpose of establishing a body of beliefs. Curriculum was broadly divided into two categories, *Manqulāt* and *Maqulāt*, the former dealing with the traditional and the latter dealing with rational sciences. Though in the early stages, traditional science was emphasized, gradually rational sciences received greater attention. The institutions which provided elementary education were known as *Maktābs* while those of higher education were called *Madrasāhs*. While *Maktābs* were generally run by public donations, rulers or nobles maintained the higher centres of learning.<sup>4</sup>

In short, the Muslim education in medieval India resembled ancient Indian education to a great extent. Education was democratized in the sense that the poor should also be educated. Muslim rule influenced the system of elementary education of the Hindus. It also brought many cultural influences from abroad bringing the studies under humanistic influence. Finally the Muslim rule established an educational system in which Hindus and Muslims could study side by side, cultivating Sanskrit and Hindi and translating the great classics of literature into different languages.

## **II. Education in British India**

### **1. The Debate on Indian Education by the English East India Company**

The advent of British rule found a system of instruction existing among both Hindus and Mohammadans in each case closely connected with their religious institutions.

Originally, the British came to India as tradesmen, but gradually they became the rulers of the country. On 31st December 1600, the English East India Company was established in England. Like all the commercial bodies, the company's main objective was trade and commerce. But during the 18th century, the decline of the Mughal dynasty brought a turning point in their political fortunes. Moreover, the final expulsion of their French rivals in the Seven Years War and the virtual acquisition of Bengal and Bihar by the treaty of 1765 made the company a ruling power. In spite of these factors, the company did not recognise the promotion of education as part of their duty or obligation. For a long time, the British at home were greatly opposed to any system of public instructions for the Indians as they were mainly interested in their own people.

There were people in Bengal who, though admitting the value of oriental learning for the advancement of civilisation, thought that better things could be achieved through the so called English education. In 1817, the semi-rationalists led by Ram Mohan Roy, the celebrated Indian reformer, founded the Hindu college at Calcutta, which made easy to establish a large number of English schools all over Bengal. The demand for English education in Bengal thus preceded twenty years before any government action in that direction.

About this time, in 1794, William Wilberforce, the famous British philan-

thropist and other benevolent persons in England took up the cause of education for the natives in India. A proposal was added to the two clauses to the company's Charter Act of that year for sending out school masters to India. This encountered the greatest opposition in the Council of Directors and it was found necessary to withdraw the clauses. For thirty years thereafter, the ruling authorities in England refused to accept the responsibility for the education of Indian people. It was only in 1813, when the company's charter was renewed, a clause was inserted that one lakh Rupees each year should be "set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the 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."<sup>6</sup> The grant was devoted mainly to the upkeep of oriental colleges, the payment of stipends to students and the publication of works of oriental literature. But there were people in England who had advocated the cause of general education

Ram Mohan Roy who was a product of the western influences and the counter influences started a movement along with the Christian missionaries. He, with David Hare stressed the necessity of education in India on modern lines in opposition to those who objected to English education and insisted on a return to the past. Ram Mohan Roy had no idea to break away from the ancestral religion and wished to see it restored to the original purity. In order to carry out his original ideas, he founded the Brahma Samaj on the basis of theism.

The famous protest of Ram Mohan Roy to William Bentick, the Governor General to stop the wasteful expenditure on fostering oriental education and to favour English education had also a parallel in Madras. Sometime later, nearly 70,000

native gentlemen under the leadership of a British civil servant in Madras, Mr. George Norton (an advocate general), complained of the government indifference to the aspirations for western education.<sup>6</sup> In response to the native's petition, Lord Elphinston, the governor of Madras drew up a proposal for a collegiate institution or a university with a 'college' and a High School Department as a feeder institution. A University Board was established to carry out the scheme and in 1841 a 'High School' was started designated as 'University'. But no progress was achieved till 1854. Not only nothing worthwhile was done in the higher stages but the education of the masses, a cause so dear to Munro was also totally abandoned.

## **2. Anglicist Versus Orientalist Controversy-The Debate-Minutes of Lord Mecauly.**

In 1815, Lord Hastings declared his intention of establishing some system of public instruction in British India. The private endeavours of the natives and the English gentlemen and the missionary bodies gave a fresh impetus to the educational progress during this time. There were causes which tended to direct the current of education into new channels.

A knowledge of English became a means of livelihood to the natives at the centres of government and a demand arose for English instruction in the Presidency towns. As the old exotic Persian court language fell into disuse and especially when it ceased to be the language of official life, the demand for education in the vernaculars which had superceded the foreign tongue made itself more widely felt. Meanwhile, a new influence in favour of popular education was being brought to bear upon the Indian government by missionary and philanthropic bodies both in this country and in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

The claim of English as opposed to Oriental education was established in India after a long struggle. Two parties arose both of which favoured the extension of vernacular education. But while the Orientalists denied that it should be supplemented by the study of classical languages of the East, Anglicists argued that the knowledge and the science of Western world should be thrown open to the natives of India through the study of English.

The Orientalists based their contention on the words of the Charter Act of 1813 on the alleged wishes of the people on the ground that Hindu and Mohammadan laws had been derived from Sanskrit and Arabic works and also that the sacred books were written in those languages. Majority of the company's servants were at first in favour of Oriental education but the change of political party in England had prominent members in the council who advocated the Western education and in the end the issue was turned against the Orientalists.

The controversy as to whether educational grants should be used to promote Oriental learning or Western knowledge. The controversy between the Orientalists and the Anglicists was finally decided in favour of the latter by the famous Minute on Education of 1835 submitted by Thomas Babington Macaulay, the legal member of the governor-general's executive council. Its recommendations were accepted by Lord William Bentinck, the governor-general. The decision was announced on March 7, 1835, in a brief resolution that determined the character of higher education in India for the ensuing century. Although the schools for Oriental learning were maintained for some years, the translation of English books into Sanskrit and Arabic was immediately discontinued. Thus the system of English education was adopted by the government. It should be noted, however,

that primary education did not attract any attention at all.

The famous Minutes of Lord Macaulay had a great influence in determining the issue of English education. After a striking eulogy on the English language, he put the point in the following passage:

"The question now before us is simple, whether when it is in our power to teach this language, we shall teach the language in which by universal confession, there are no books on any subject which deserves to be compared to our own, whether we teach European science, we shall teach systems which by universal confession wherever they can patronise sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance at the public expenses, medical doctrines which will disagree in English farrier astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school, history abounding in kings thirty feet high and reigns thirty thousand years long and geography made of seas of treacle and seas of butter."<sup>8</sup>

Almost immediately after his minutes were written, the government issued a resolution which decided unequivocally in favour of a Western education but the existing Oriental institutions were to be kept in full efficiency. In the following years, the missionary efforts played an important part in the educational progress. The interest of enlightened natives like Raja Ram Mohan Roy was aroused and the Government accepted an increasing share of work and responsibility.

Thus the well known Minutes of Lord Macaulay in a way can be considered as the corner stone of English education in India. It put the seal in favour of western learning through the medium of English for which liberalism, missionary zeal, progress and utilitarianism were the contributory factors. Also, the introduction of western influence in India through English education was well recognised as the

most crucial factor in all studies on education in India.

Bentitck's resolution was followed by other enactments accelerating the growth of English education in India. The first was the Freedom of Press Act (1825) which encouraged the printing and publication of books and made English books available at low costs. Two years later, to the dismay of the Muslims, Persian was abolished as the language of record and the courts which was replaced by English and Indian languages in the higher and the lower courts respectively.

### **III. Agencies of Education**

#### **1. Under the English East India Company**

During the early days of British rule, education was left in the hands of private enterprises, missionaries and indigencous village school masters. The principles which influenced the conduct of administration in India and the Court of Directors did little to supplement the indigencous systems of education that existed in their territories. Their efforts were confined to the establishment of colleges (colleges here refer to higher institutions, not the colleges in the modern sense), leaving the elementary and high schools to their own systems. They had no definite policy and aims for imparting education to Indians until the begining of the 18th century. It is to be noted that the educational policies of the British in India varied from time to time depending on the change in rule in England and in India and the various liberal movements in Europe as a whole.

##### **a. Role of the Company**

Mention may be made about the establishment of colleges for Oriental learning such as the Calcutta *Madrasāh* for Mohammadans founded by Warren Hastings in 1781 to conciliate the Muslims in Calcutta and to qualify them for the appointments in clerical jobs in the administration. Accordingly, a Sanskrit College was

established in Benares for Hindus by Jonathen Duncan, a resident at Varanasi with the prime motive of helping them in their administration. Beyond these two institutions, the company did not undertake much interest to maintain Oriental educational institutions.

In Bombay, a Sanskrit college was established in 1821 by Mount Stuart Elphinston, the Governor of Bombay (1819-27) who favoured the instruction based on three languages. Education in Bombay owed much to the enlightened efforts of M.S. Elphinston. The native education society of Bombay established in 1822 mainly at his instance started a large number of schools for teaching English as well as Indian languages. It also trained the teachers and published large number of books in Indian languages. But ultimately, English was adopted as the sole medium of instruction at the higher stage. English schools were established at the districts headquarters. A number of vernacular schools supported partly by the state and partly by the people also grew up under the control of the Board of Education and indigenous schools were inspected and encouraged as well. Both English and modern Indian languages had continued as the media of instruction.

The British Government had attempted to introduce western education through the medium of English in the Madras presidency. Even as early as 1829 when the controversy was not resolved between the Orientalists and Anglicists, the Court of Directors informed the government of Madras not to fritter away their energies and resources in patronising vernacular learning but to concentrate on the spread of English education.<sup>9</sup> Though afoot since 1829, English education in Madras presidency can be dated only from 1841 when the Presidency College in Madras was established.

Lord Wellesley established the college of Fort William for the English officials of Calcutta. Lord Amherst and Lord William Bentick founded Sanskrit colleges in 1825 and in 1835 respectively in Calcutta. In 1836, a wealthy native gentleman founded a *Madrasāh* in Hoogli.

Finally, Lord Hardinge as governor general issued a resolution on October 10, 1844 declaring that for all government appointments, preference would be given to the knowledge of English. These measures strengthened the position of English in India and the lingering prejudices against learning English had vanished forever.

In a general view of education during the last two decades of the 19th century, drift was more apparent than government resolve. Elementary education was starved and undernourished and secondary education was suffering from want of proper supervision. There was enormous growth of high schools and colleges since the Education Commission had given a free charter to private enterprises. Many of these private institutions were "coaching institutions rather than places of learning". The universities had no control over them. State control was negligible because the government had adopted a *laissez-faire* policy.

In 1844, Lord Hardinge further decided to give employment in the administration to the Indians educated in English schools. Between 1813-1854, English education had made great progress in Bengal. Many of the schools and colleges were started for the teaching of upper classes, but very little was done for the improvement of elementary education. Though indigenous schools and *pāṭasālais* existed in large numbers, teachers were paid very badly.

In the midst, the three Indian universities were founded at Calcutta, Madras

and Bombay in 1847. This was a further step towards higher education. Three other developments of this period that deserved greater attention were the great work done by Christian missionaries in the field of education, the beginning of professional education by which medical, engineering and law colleges were established and the official sanction obtained for the education of girls for which Lord Dalhousie offered open support of the government.

**b. Role of the Christian Missionaries**

Though the company did little for the maintenance of educational institutions, the Christian missionaries took much interest in spreading education in the country. They gave a new impetus to education and started elementary schools for the common people including the untouchable castes. Slowly, they started establishing educational institutions which was in the beginning stage. The missionaries' interest in education had two distinguished aspects. They studied the vernacular to preach the people and to translate Bible. They taught English as a channel of western knowledge.

The Christian missionaries made strong efforts in the field of vernacular education and made it as their own. In spite of the discouragement from the authorities and the East India Company, they not only devoted themselves with courage to their special work of evangelisation, but were also the first Europeans to study the vernacular dialects spoken by the people. Nearly two centuries ago, the Jesuits at Madurai mastered Tamil and left their contributions in that language which is considered to be the best by the native authors.

The first English missionary college in India owed its foundation to the Baptist mission. In 1799, Carey and four other missionaries had established them-

selves at Hoogly. In 1818 they founded the Serampur college. In 1820, a college was founded at Calcutta with funds subscribed in England in honour of Middleton, the first Anglican Bishop in India for the purpose of educating the youth to qualify them to preach Christianity.

Alexander Duff (1806-1878), a personality of exceptional importance in the expansion of Protestant missionary work and the first missionary of the established church of Scotland advocated western education for Indians, an idea which had the strong support of Ram Mohan Roy. Alexander Duff of the free church of Scotland was the foremost pioneer in the remarkable work of Christian missionary in the field of higher education. One of his colleagues, Dr. John Wilson founded Wilson college in Bombay. Two other names from among the many, the names of Dr. William Miller of the Madras Christian college and Fr. Francis Bertram of St. Joseph college of Tiruchirappalli who later founded the Loyolla college in Madras may be mentioned in this context. <sup>10</sup>

Dr. Alexander Duff established a seminary for imparting literacy, scientific and religious education through the medium of English. This early missionary efforts had the most important influence in fostering the demand of English education. They taught the natives that education was a profitable acquisition, while the government learnt the usefulness of teaching English to the natives in public service.

Until the first half of the 19th century, neither the British Government nor the private Indian efforts were fully developed and the Protestant mission had a near monopoly over Indian education. However when the Government began to build up a system of secular education from primary to university levels based on

the Educational Despatch of 1854, the Protestant missions initially resented it and demanded for a legal recognition of their prominent place and finally joined the system. This, however, did not happen. Instead, the missions were subordinated to the government between 1858 and 1882 and relegated to the third position after the Indian Education commission in 1882.<sup>11</sup>

But the Christian missions had shown keen interest in the education of the natives, while the Council of Education had accumulated an unutilised balance of Rs. three lakhs between 1848 and 1853, no more than Rs 8490 seemed to have been given to the missionary educational activities even though there was a provision to grant Rs 20,000 towards grant-in-aid. The Christian missions were maintaining an elaborate educational network at their own cost.<sup>12</sup>

Down to 1854, the elementary school system with the exception of the native schools, had been completely under missionary control.<sup>13</sup> "The SPG supported not less than 186 schools of whom 3,885 were boys and 1,349 girls and the amount expended by the society exceeded Rs 49,000 in 1852. The Church Missionary Society was conducting 1186 schools attended by 38,005 scholars in 1852. In majority of these schools, the course of instruction was elementary. In several of these English schools in different parts of the country, a higher order of instruction was imparted. After surveying the principal institutions imparting education in English for both boys and girls conducted by the missions all over the presidency, the Director said the Roman Catholic and the various Protestant Missionary Societies were conducting 697 schools with 22,462 scholars in 1854."<sup>14</sup>

### **Girls education**

The British Indian government's interest in the education of girls was minimum

during the first half of the 19th century. Their willingness to shoulder this responsibility was explained as deference to Indian socio religious sentiments which were said to be un-conducive to the education of girls. Even the celebrated Educational Despatch of 1854 did no more than calling attention to the education of women and exhort the government of extending support to the agencies at work already. Till the time of Education Despatch 1854, the government of Madras appeared to have been pre-occupied with the question whether the time was ripe to assume the responsibility of female education.<sup>15</sup>

Even ten years after the establishment of the university of Madras, the instruction imparted to the great majority of the girls in schools, numbering 10,500 never went beyond "a very elementary level of productive of no permanent effect."

The Director of Public Instruction in Madras wrote of the female education in 1868. "In almost all cases, the instruction conveyed was of a very elementary stamp; and in too many, no permanent effect beyond rendering pupils better disposed towards female education and so paving the way for the instruction of a succeeding generation."<sup>16</sup>

In fact, in a society that was truly indifferent to its female education on socio-religious grounds, it was the missionary perseverance which awakened the realisation of the need of female education. In the early years, it was invariably the policy all over where in India to evoke interest in female education. By 1851 when the Government was yet to consider the education of women, the missionaries were already conducting 285 day schools with 8919 girls and another 2274 in their boarding schools. It was in such a situation that the Protestant missions were clamouring not only for financial assistance but also for a fair deal in the education system in the country.<sup>17</sup>

## **2. Under the Crown**

### **a. Role of the Government**

#### **i. Wood's Despatch**

In 1854, Britain's Secretary of State for India confirmed the educational policy of Wood's Despatch also known as the Educational Despatch of 1854 which laid on the shoulders of Government of India, the duty of creating and maintaining a properly articulated system of education from primary to the university stage. To carry out this scheme, the Despatch entrusted upon the government the creation of a department of public instruction in every presidency.

The Wood's Despatch suggested the creation of educational departments in all provinces and that the universities already established in India, where a sufficient number of institutions needed for their establishments were already in existence. Below the universities, there should be a network of educational institutions which would include colleges, high schools, teaching through English or modern Indian languages and primary schools, most of which would be indigenous elementary schools assisted by a systematic policy of suitable grants-in-aid to those institutions which reached an approved standard. This was with the realisation that the government would be unable to meet the task of education and also to encourage private enterprise in education. The Despatch also suggested the development of private enterprise, missionary as well as Indian, through a proper system of grants-in-aid. The commission also suggested the training of teachers in normal schools, the conferment of government jobs on educated persons and increased attention to the development of education among young girls and women.<sup>18</sup> The principles then laid down were re-affirmed in 1859 after the transfer of administration to the Crown and guided mainly the effort of the government for the better

education of the people.

In the next fifty years, the policies laid down by Wood's Despatch were slowly and steadily implemented. In 1855, educational departments were created in the provinces of Bombay, Madras and Bengal, North western Provinces and the Punjab and to the new provinces which were very active between 1855 and 1902 by establishing and maintaining educational institutions at all levels. They also supervised and aided institutions conducted by other agencies such as local bodies and voluntary organisations.

### **Primary and Secondary Education**

Many public and primary schools were opened in the provinces of Bombay, Calcutta, Agra and Delhi. During the next years, the progress of primary education though considerable, did not keep pace with the extension of higher education. The grant-in-aid system also did not secure an adequate development of primary education. The mutiny also put the government in financial difficulties. Between 1871 and 1882 the number of primary schools had more than quadrupled. There was enormous increase in the secondary stage and 6000 schools were under instruction in sixty seven arts colleges affiliated to several universities.

The progress since 1881-82 had been considerable but the rate of development in primary education was not maintained. To make matters worse, during the past few years, the work had been greatly hindered by plague and famine. Primary education had slow progress since the population had already been accustomed with indigenous systems of education and schools. Efforts were taken to convey the benefits of education to the poorer riots and lower castes who from time immemorial lived without instruction. In addition, people had leniency towards

English education. Steps had been made in later years to popularise primary education by simplifying the course of study and bringing it into closer relationship with the daily life of the people.

## **ii. Hunter Commission of 1882**

In 1882-83, an Education Commission under the chairmanship of sir William Hunter appointed by Lord Ripon's government, endeavoured to complete the scheme inaugurated in 1854 by the Despatch of Lord Halifax to review the progress and criticise the working of the system. The commission produced a classic document which made several useful recommendations. It carefully examined the condition of education in each province, indicated the defects and laid down principles for further development. The general principles were reaffirmed, amended and supplemented by a number of fresh instructions. The results of its labours had been paid to place public instruction on a broader and more popular basis, to encourage private enterprise in teaching, to give a more adequate recognition to the indigenous schools and to provide that education of the people should advance at a more equal place along with the instruction of the higher classes. Female education and the instruction of certain backward classes of community such as Mohammadans received special attention. The general effect of the commissions recommendation was to develop the department of public instruction into a system of truly national education for India conducted and supervised in an increasing degree by people themselves.<sup>19</sup>

Shortly after this under Lord Ripon's scheme of local self government, the management of government schools was in large measure made over to municipalities and district boards.

## **Higher Education**

By the review of 1898, various reforms were instituted. A conference of Indian educationists and administrators was convened to discuss all branches of the subjects. An officer from England was appointed as adviser to the government of India in educational matters with the title of Director General of Education. A commission was constituted to enquire into the conditions, prospects and needs of the university education and an expert committee travelled through India to investigate and advise on the system of technical education. Some of the project reforms had already been carried out while others were in the preliminary stage.

### **Education in the XXth Century -Social and Historical background.**

International wars, together with an intensification of internal stresses and conflicts among social, radical, and ideological groups have characterized the XXth Century and have had profound effects on education. Rapidly spreading prosperity but widening gaps between rich and poor, immense increase in world population but a declining birth rate in Western countries, the growth of large-scale industry and its dependence on science and technological advancement, the increasing power of both organized labour and international business, and the enormous influence of both technical and socio-psychological advances in communication, especially as utilized in mass media, were changes that had far reaching effects. Challenges to accepted values, including those supported by religion; changes in social relations, especially toward versions of group and individual equality; and an explosion of knowledge affecting paradigms as well as particular information marked a century of social and political swings, always toward a more dynamic and less categorical resolution. The institutional means of handling this uncertain world had been to accept more diversity while maintaining basic forms and to rely on

management efficiency to ensure practical outcomes <sup>20</sup>

The period between 1901-1921 was a period of transition as far as the educational system in India was concerned

### **iii. The Indian University Commission of 1902**

The Indian University Commission of 1902 under the chairmanship of Dr Raleigh, carried out a comprehensive review of the first five Indian universities of Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, the Punjab and Allahabad. The report of this commission led to the Indian University Act of 1904 which attempted to raise the standards of attainment.

### **iv. Indian University Act of 1904**

It was Lord Curzon who passed the Indian University Act of 1904 on the advice of the Raleigh's committee which enabled the universities to assume teaching functions, constitute syndicates for the speedier transaction of business, providing strict conditions for affiliation, periodic inspection of the colleges and defining territorial jurisdiction of the different institutions. All these led to a substantial measure of qualitative improvement in higher education.

### **v. Review of the educational policy - Sadler Commission**

The report of the Calcutta University commission of 1917 under the chairmanship of Sir Michael Sadler was a comprehensive document which dealt with the university education in general and also touched upon the content and quality of education. The report of the commission remained largely unimplemented, but its findings and recommendations exercised great influence on the development of higher education in the 1920s and 1930s. These early enquiries and reviews of education did not place sufficient stress on mass education and overlooked the

importance of the elementary and secondary stages of education

#### vi. National policy of education

It was the nationalist movement of the late nineteenth century that raised a strong criticism of the colonial system. Both the nationalist leaders and the educationists condemned this system. There emerged several constructive solutions and experiments which made some original contributions to educational thoughts and practices which were notable efforts for the future. As part of the concept of national education put forward by great leaders such as Annie Besant, Lala Lajpat Rai and Mahatma Gandhi, who wanted to have an education which would inculcate love of the motherland and emphasis national and vocational education to build up the national character, a few institutions such as *Kashi vidyapeeth* and *Jamia Millia Islamia* were established that worked independent of the official system.

But their influence was limited and the system dominated this scene until the advent of independence. Mahatma Gandhi's Basic education with a view to change the academic character of the system making education less costly which he put forward in 1937 though accepted by the Indian National Congress also did not last for long.

From 1921-47, education was under Indian control, since by the new act, education was placed with a minister responsible to the provincial legislatures. By 1947, the number of universities had increased to 20, arts and science colleges to 140, engineering colleges to 16, teachers training colleges to 42 and 82 others. Unitary teaching and residential universities were established at Allahabad, Varanasi, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Aligarh, Dacca, and Annamalai. An inter university board was also instituted by 1935. Side by side, unemployment problem had also crept in

## **b. Role of Christian missionaries**

In the considered view of scholars, the period between 1870 and 1940 is characterised on the part of the Protestant missions to bring about the evangelisation of India based on a new perspective, in relation to missionary attitudes and approaches towards higher education and the political outlook of educated Indians. This process of evangelisation was attempted through two approaches, i.e., evangelisation through education and intelligentsia. and evangelisation through the masses. The first approach dominated the pattern of missionary activities during 1872-1910 and the two decades between 1910 and 1930 witnessed the prominence of the second approach.<sup>21</sup>

The missionaries adopted a policy of voluntary restriction on the expansion of their educational institutions. They maintained only a few good institutions which meant primarily for the Christians, but afterwards were opened to all. Thus the private enterprise provided a large number of colleges and secondary institutions which the country needed.

During the revolt of 1857, the Christian missionaries suffered serious setback, but they had enjoyed exceptional prosperity after the revolt. While the government had adhered to the policy of religious neutrality, there was a general recognition of the valuable role, which the missionaries played in education and social work. The system of grants-in-aid was fully utilised by the missions, both Catholics and Protestants. The number of Christian missionaries from other nations had increased considerably after the revolt. Among them were American missionaries of many denominations and their financial resources facilitated the development of medical and social work. Mention may be made of the methodists,

congregationalists, the Scottish, Canadian, Presbyterians and the Salvation army. Special mention should be made of the International Y.M.C.A & Y.W.C.A. Among the Catholics, in addition to the Jesuits, were Franciscans, Capucins, and Fathers of Foreign Missions of Paris, the Benedictines, Dominicans, Salesians and foreign missionaries of Milan. These Christian missionaries had worked in various capacities.<sup>22</sup>

There was extraordinary development of the educational work of the missions with which increasing number of Indian priests, pastors and laymen had been associated. Christian colleges in principal cities were among the foremost educational institutions in India. In the promotion of education among women which was a noteworthy development, the Christian missionaries played a dominant part. There were over 91 grade colleges for men and women in India, 800 high schools, 1500 middle schools and thousands of primary and elementary schools under Christian management.<sup>23</sup>

In connection with the expansion of educational and social work of Christian missionaries, emphasis should be given for the increasing role of women in modern times. The Catholics have a large number of nuns, both Indian and foreign, working in schools, colleges and mission stations. Likewise, the Protestants have also a large number of well trained lay helpers in all other missions. Many women's colleges are conducted by Indian and European societies in the forefront of education in India. The Church of England, Zenana Mission founded in 1851 had a fine record of educational and Social work. All these devoted and dedicated workers were brought to the service of the poor and sufferings.

#### **IV. Beneficiaries of education**

##### **1. Under the Company**

###### **a. Financing and Funding**

As early as 1687, the Court of Directors asked the Government of Madras to charge a tax upon the inhabitants for the building of one or more free schools for the teaching of English to the Indians. It was also ordered that the salaries however to be paid by the local inhabitants or the beneficiaries. In 1713, The government of Madras gave permission to the Danish Missionaries to open schools in the presidency. They opened two charity schools for the city of Madras.

The Charter Act of 1813 which gave the Protestant missionary permission to come to India was careful to qualify that the company had no obligation to give financial assistance to the educational endeavours. In fact, the sum of one lakh Rupees set apart in England for the promotion of knowledge among the inhabitants of British territory in India was intended to enable the company to create rival set of institutions or patronise those of the Indians in order that they may become a reliable counterpoise, a protecting break water against the threatened deluge of missionary enterprise.

This object was generally kept in view between 1813 and 1853. The English East India Company spent the annual grant of one lakh Rupees (10 lakhs from 1833) in maintaining its own institutions and rarely did it sanction any grant-in-aid to the mission schools. Consequently the two systems of modern schools came up, viz (a) the mission schools with their insistence on Bible teaching and (b) the exclusively secular schools conducted by the Company which grew independent of each other between 1813 and 1853. It became apparent by 1830s and 1840s that the Company's schools were proving serious rivals to the mission institutions.

In places like Madras Presidency, the mission schools were far more numerous than the Company schools even though they were maintained without much financial assistance from the Company

James Romason, the Lt governor of North Western Provinces was the first to levy a cess, a sort of revenue for the spread of mass education With the help of this cess and an equal grant-in-aid from the government funds, he established a large number of primary schools in selected villages

A laudable experiment in the field of vernacular education was carried out by James Romason in the North-Western Provinces Romason's *Halqabandi* system attempted to bring about primary education within the easy reach of the common people In each *halqabandi* (circuit) of village, a school was established in the central village so that all the villages within a radius of two miles might avail themselves of this facility of education For the maintenance of these schools, the village land holders agreed to contribute at the rate of 1% of their land income This experiment proved successful and in few years, Romason opened 897 schools and provided elementary education for 23,688 children

#### **b. Grants-in-aid**

The policy of grants-in-aid laid down by Woods' Despatch of 1854 came to be the corner stone of the subsequent education edifice and the role of the government came to be confined to the regulation of the grants-in-aid In 1855, educational departments were created in the major provinces In every district, schools for teaching English were established Grants-in-aid were extended to the lower institutions and girls schools

### **c. Inspection system**

Romason also established the system of inspection which included a visitor in each *pargana*, a *zila* visitor in each district and a visitor general for the province as a whole. The beginning of the school inspection system could be traced to this period.

A department of Public Instruction was organised in every province under a Director with a staff of inspectors. This scheme gave a definite outline which had gradually enlarged. A net work of schools was spread over the country, graduated from the indigenous institutions up to the colleges. There were regular inspections and a series of scholarships at once stimulated efficiency and opened a path to university. Certificate examinations were conducted for the children of the poor. Institutions and pupils were classified under primary, secondary and collegiate stages.

Though a beginning had been made about the inspection and encouragement of schools over the large portion of India, educational progress up to 1853 was not encouraging. So the Court of Directors decided that government should afford assistance to the more extended and systematic promotion of general education in India and addressed the governor general in council in the Wood's Despatch which sketched in outline, a complete scheme of public education, controlled and aided in part and directly managed by the state. In the mean time, the great revolt of 1857 had taken place and the rule of the British Indian provinces passed from the hands of the East India Company to the Crown.

### **d. Incentive-scholarship**

A system of state scholarship played an important part in the public instruc-

tion of India. In 1839, Lord Auckland proposed to connect the chief district schools with the central colleges by attaching to the latter and awarding scholarships to the best scholars. The Educational Despatch of 1854 suggested the extension of this system.

### **c. Teacher training - Pedagogy teaching**

The provision of an adequate training for many teachers required for the instruction of several million scholars was one of the most difficult of Indian educational problems. The Despatch of 1854 referred to the deficiency of qualified school masters and imperfect methods of teaching and laid particular stress on the importance of these instructors and recommended that all government teachers in secondary schools should be required to pass a test in the principles and practices of teaching.

## **2. Under the Crown**

### **a. Role of the Government**

It is worth mentioning that after the transfer of administration from the Company to the Crown, the state followed a policy of religious neutrality in relation with public instruction. This principle was emphatically asserted in the Despatch of 1854 and has been rigidly enforced. No religious instruction was given in government schools. It was a policy of sound secular instruction.

Moral learning was given importance in schools. The duty of enforcing discipline caring for the moral training of the pupils was imposed on the teachers by the regulation of local governments. The instruction given in medical colleges and schools had greatly enhanced their capacity for fulfilling this duty.

## **i. Primary Education**

In the field of primary education, there was considerable progress. Most of the provinces passed compulsory educational laws and the same was introduced in a few selected and rural areas. The powers of local bodies over primary education and teachers salary also increased and the arrangements for their training also improved. The number of schools also increased to considerable extent. But enrollment of the children was very low.

## **ii. Secondary Education**

As far as secondary education was concerned, much development had taken place during this time. The number of high schools and middle schools was enormous. Indian language was adopted as the media of instruction to improve the quality of education and the study of English was made a compulsory subject. There was great improvement in the training of teachers. A large number of technical, commercial and agricultural high schools were started. The dominance of academic schools and that of university entrance requirements, low salaries and the generally unsatisfied conditions of service of teachers, absence of an adequate systems of scholarships for the support of promising students, all these disadvantages were in the secondary level of education.

Most of the indigenous schools died out during this time either through competition with government schools or through neglect. The Educational Despatch of 1859 recommended for the collection of a levy of a local cess as the rate of education. In 1882, this levy was imposed in all areas except in Bengal. Municipalities established in towns and cities also contributed money to primary education. Besides local funds, there was grants-in-aid sanctioned from government funds as the result of which there was greater expansion in the field of primary

education, equipments and printed books.

### **b. Grants-in-aid**

Most of the private schools which came with the scope of educational department received grant-in-aid from provincial and local funds. Grants were given in aid of salaries and for buildings, furniture, appliances, books, scholarships and special needs. The 1882 educational commission recommended that salary grants should be given on the result grant system i.e., the result of an individual examination of the pupils in different classes. In Madras, best schools were put on a fixed grant list.

In 1901-02 colleges increased from 219 to 229. There was rapid growth of higher education after the foundation of universities. In 1903 Grants-in-aid was sanctioned for the development of the universities. It was announced that additional universities could be established and all universities should be financially assisted to undertake research and teaching activities. By 1921, the number of universities in India had increased to 11. Several new ones came up such as Benares, Mysore, Patna, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow and Osmania.

### **c. Inspection**

Since 1882, the condition and progress of the educational system had been passed under periodic reviews. The government on each occasion issued fresh regulations and orders at the time to be desirable. In 1897, the Indian educational service was organised to cover the senior posts. Since the recruitment to the service took place in England, these posts went to Europeans while Indians were absorbed in lower posts in the departments. It was Lord Curzon who passed the Indian University Act of 1904 on the advice of the Raleigh's committee which

enabled the universities to assume teaching functions, constitute syndicates for the speedier transaction of business, providing strict conditions for affiliation, periodic inspection of the colleges and defining territorial jurisdiction of the different institutions. All these led to a substantial measure of qualitative improvement in higher education.

Adequate arrangements for inspection and control for the management schools and colleges were organised, since it was of much importance in a system of public instruction in which management of schools and colleges was left to local and private agencies assisted by the state contribution. The main controlling agency was the education department maintained by each local government, which in addition to providing inspectors, furnished professors and teachers for the government schools. The department was divided into Indian, provincial and subordinate services. The Indian services were mainly recruited from among the graduates of the United Kingdom and its members were employed as inspectors of schools and principals and professors of colleges. For purpose of inspection, provinces were divided into circles and sub circles.

The inspector was the additional representative of the government in the circle whose duty was to keep himself well informed with regard to all educational matters in his jurisdiction. Each of the more important provinces had its own Director of Public Instruction who was usually, a member of Indian educational service and the Home Department of government of India on whom vested the duty of supervising and coordinating educational efforts. Throughout the country was now assisted by a Director General of Education who spent much of his time on inspection tour in several provinces.

#### **d. Scholarship**

The educational commission of 1881 found the system introduced by Lord Auckland in operation to greater or less degree in all provinces and laid down on its importance and recommended the grant of scholarships by open competition. A gifted boy may now pass from the village school to the university and then into the public service by a graduated series of state scholarships. In addition to state scholarships, there were a number of private scholarships, many of which were attached to one or the other of the universities. A few post graduate fellowships and scholarships had been founded for the encouragement of advanced study and research.

#### **e. Teacher Training**

As regards the primary teachers and lower methods of secondary schools, the course of study and examinations were organised by the local government. Central and district schools were maintained for the instruction by the government and in some cases by the local boards and missionary societies. The results of the training given in these schools had been on the whole satisfactory. A few institutions for professional teaching of head masters and other principal masters of secondary schools and of Assistant Professors for colleges were established to give more advanced instruction. The best example was the teachers college at Madras.<sup>24</sup>

#### **f. Examination**

In 1901-02, the examinations alternating with matriculation were the upper secondary examination in Madras, the school final examination in Bombay and the United Provinces, the service entrance examination of the Punjab University and the Punjab clerical and commercial examination. Apart from Matriculation , an-

other system of examination was introduced as the final examination, the alternative to matriculation which arose from the recommendation of the educational commission of 1882. The commission found the high schools used almost exclusively as a preparatory school for the university and the course of action dominated the university standard.

A series of public examinations were held at different stages of the school course. Some of the compulsory subjects were made optional in later years. They continued to exercise a dominant influence on school teaching and had been used for class promotions, the distribution of grants-in-aid, the award of scholarships and the list for subordinate government appointments.

#### **V. Content of Education**

Curriculum was broader and academic including kindergarten or object lessons, history, geography, hygiene, agriculture, science and physical exercises. Better methods of teaching were adopted and there were improvements in the standard of teaching in the schools. These schools readily admitted girls and scheduled caste students which was highly advantageous over the indigenous students. But overall progress in mass education was negligible. At the higher level, the teaching of arts and Science at the university level became the function of colleges. In 1857, total number of colleges was 27, in 1901, it was 219 for liberal arts and law, 16 for professional colleges and four for medicine which were run by private enterprises. Medium of instruction was English. Study of modern Indian languages as subjects was neglected except to some extent in Madras.

The Indian University Commission of 1902 recommended that a minimum age limit of fifteen should be fixed for matriculation which had generally been

accepted as a qualifying test by the government and private employees as well as by the universities. It was regarded as a common goal of the school career. The general subjects were English, an orient or European classical language or an Indian or European vernacular, elementary mathematics, history and geography. Some universities included elementary science in the course.

#### **VI. Medium of Instruction**

Under the English East India Company in the early period, Indian languages were promoted along with English language. A number of vernacular schools and English schools in modern Indian languages had got encouragement. English had become the medium of instruction with the arrival of William Bentick and with the support of his law minister Lord Mecauly. In 1866-67, under the Crown, vernacular instruction was placed on a firm footing. Though the government was promoting the cause of education, little or nothing was done to further vernacular education through which the benefits of education could reach the masses. It was only in 1867, the necessity for establishing vernacular schools on a sound basis received the attention of the government. But it is to be noted that the spread of English education had facilitated the learning of English. The proportion to population was highest in Madras where English was more commonly spoken than in any other provinces and the lowest was in the United Provinces.

As regards the punishments to the pupils, normally it was impositions and fines. For graver offences corporal punishments like suspension or rustication and expulsion were given. Good conduct registers were maintained in some places.

## **VII. Adult Education**

Another notable feature of this period was the small beginning made in the field of adult education though not organised on mass scale and it varied from province to province.

Special importance was given to the domiciled European and Eurasian community. Lord Canning and Lord Ripon had taken up this cause. All classes of European schools were encouraged by liberal grants-in-aid based on the attendance and proficiency of the students. Special grants were given to schools in localities containing a small or poor European population and to free schools and orphanages in aid of their boarding charges and for the boarding of the children whose parents resided where ever there were no schools.

Several chef colleges were established at Ajmer, Rajkot, and Lahore where some of the features of the public school system had been reproduced with the object of equipping young chefs and nobles physically, mentally and intellectually. Industrial schools were started for the education of Indian society. Carpentry, smiths work, shoe making and tailoring were taught there.

Schools for Europeans also attracted the attention of the government. Foremost among special schools were the asylums in the hills for the orphans of British soldiers like at Ootakamand and at Saniwar founded in memory of Sir Henry Lawrence.

## **VIII. Technical Education**

Schools of art were also established by the British to preserve the artistic heritage of the country. Of such schools, the oldest founded by Dr. A. Hunter at Madras in 1850 which was taken over by the education department in 1856 com-

prised two departments, artistic and industrial. This institution and the art schools at Calcutta and Bombay founded on its model had been successful in developing the industrial capacities of the students and in training workmen for public employment. Museums were also established in provincial capitals and in other larger towns.

Like technical institutes, engineering colleges were established in Madras, Bengal, Bombay, and the United Provinces which trained the students for various branches of public works department, employment under municipalities and local boards, local mines, electricity firms and in other capacities. The colleges at Roorkee in United Province, Sibpur near Calcutta and the like were noteworthy. The engineering course lasted for five years. At sibpur, Europeans, Eurasians and native boys worked together.

Agriculture formed one of the subjects of instruction in a number of industrial schools. Agriculture colleges or sections were established in Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, United Provinces and central provinces. In Bengal, a central college was established for the whole of India. Agriculture Research college at Pusa in Darbanga district of Bihar was established. Veterinary colleges and schools were opened in many parts of India.

Commercial education was established with a view of training the students for a commercial career. The Byramji Jiji bhoys commercial school at Bombay and Reid Christian college at Lucknow schools were noteworthy. The Allahabad school final examinations, Punjab school final examinations, Madras technical examinations, the examination of the London Chamber of Commerce held in Bombay deserved high attention in training the students for a commercial career.

The examination of the London Chamber of commerce in Bombay were recognised in the code of European Schools.

### **IX. Vocational Education**

The Indian Educational commission reported that there was a real need for some modern course which would fit for boys for industrial or commercial pursuits. The commission also pointed out that matriculation did not serve this purpose and was intended to ascertain whether the candidate was ripe for university studies. Vocational education also recommended for the bifurcation of the secondary course within two years and that in the upper classes of the high school, there should be two types of instruction, one leading to matriculation and other of a more practical character intended to fit boys for commercial and non-literary pursuits. The recommendation of the commission was accepted by the government but the progress was rather slow in giving effect to this suggestion.

### **X. School of Medicine**

The instruction given for the medical profession had been perhaps the most successful branches of technical education. Natives showed considerable efficiency and aptitude for medicine. Medical instruction was given in the government colleges at Madras, Calcutta, Bombay and Lahore and in twenty two government medical schools. The Calcutta and Madras medical colleges were founded for the training of subordinate medical officers. Bombay and Lahore colleges were founded in 1845 and in 1860. Medical schools were founded later for the training of the public service officers (hospital assistants) of a lower standards than the assistant surgeons educated in the colleges. The length of the full course in general was five years. The colleges were attached to large hospitals in which clinical instruction was given.

## **XI. School of Law**

The system of legal instruction was also given great attention though it varied in different provinces. There were centralised Law schools in Madras, Lahore and Bombay while in Bengal and United Provinces, law classes were attached to a number of arts colleges. There were separate courses of instruction for students preparing for ordinary pleadership and for those studying for the university examinations or the higher native bar. The university commission advised that the question of creating or mending and improving good central schools of law should be taken up at each of the universities. Natives of India had a natural talent for legal subjects and the legal bar had produced many eminent lawyers.<sup>25</sup>

## **XII. Muslim education**

Education had made less progress among the Muslims than the Hindu portion of the population. one quarter of the total number of Mohammadans pupils were taught in Koran schools or other indigenous elementary institutions. The proportion of Mohammadan population receiving secondary education was only 2:2 of the proportion in the case of Hindus. Collegiate education of the ratio was as low as 1:4.

A number of social and political causes had contributed to the comparative backwardness of the Mohammadans in educational matters. The principal scholastic cause was that the teaching in the mosque must precede the lessons of the school. Before he was devoted to secular education, he had to go through his sacred classical texts which took some years making it difficult for him to cope up with the young Hindu boy. The educational commission of 1882, proposed a different treatment of the Mohammadan community in respect of education which the Government of India approved, which declared that like other classes, they

should take advantage of the facilities of higher education provided by the general educational system. Considerable efforts had been made by the more enlightened among the Mohammadans to foster the growth of education in their community. But the progress was not satisfactory.

### **XIII. Female education**

Female education had to encounter peculiar difficulties. The peculiar social customs in regard to child marriage and the seclusion of women of the well-to-do classes hindered the growth of female education. Until 1849, the government had not taken up the subject, when Delhousie informed the Bengal council of education that hence forth, its functions were to embrace female education and the first recognised girls school was founded shortly afterwards by a committee of native gentlemen.

The Despatch of 1854 and the Educational Commission of 1882 had advocated for the education of girls with the result that there was a considerable development of the public instruction of girls. Many colleges and schools were established for the female undergraduates. More schools, better trained female teachers and an adequate female agency were the pressing needs to which special attention was given. The system of education and methods in girls schools were similar to that of the institution for boys, but the standards were in some respects lower and special subjects like house hold accounts, domestic economy and needle work were also introduced.<sup>26</sup>

It is to be noted that as in other educational matters, the missionaries were the pioneers of progress of female education. In a few exceptional places such as Tinneveli in Madras, Kashi hills of Assam and the Karen tribes of Burma, female

education had made real progress, for, in these localities, the missionaries had sufficient influence to overcome the prejudices of the people. But in other places, even in the large towns and among the English speaking classes, all attempts to give a modern education to women were regarded with aversion and obtained slight success only. Efforts were made by the Bengal government to utilise the female members of the Vaishnavite sects in female education but with out permanent success. Throughout the North western Provinces, Oudh and lower Bengal, the number was less due to their affluence and wealth. Madras, British Burma and in a less degree, Bombay and Punjab contributed satisfactorily tolerative proportion in the matter of female education. In 1877-78, the normal technical industrial schools numbered to 155 with 6764 students. School mistresses as well as school masters were trained. Here also, the missionaries had shown themselves active in anticipating a work which the government subsequently had taken up.<sup>27</sup>

#### **XIV. Education of the backward classes**

Education had spread among the backward classes very rapidly. But the promotion of education of children of lowest castes both male and female was a matter of peculiar difficulty. These castes were completely illiterate under the native rule and their education was looked upon with jealous by the higher castes since they thought that education and knowledge was their monopoly. They were further objected on the ground of physical contamination, supposed to be involved by caste rules. Christian missionaries had taken up their case and worked for their uplift. Much of these prejudices had disappeared to a greater extent. Due to the initiative of Gandhiji, the popular ministeries allowed very liberal concessions to the backward classes in general and the scheduled castes and tribes in particular with the result that education had spread rapidly among the masses.

After having discussed the various aspects of the educational systems in British India in general an attempt is made about the system in the nearest and one of the oldest British presidency of Madras and the district of Malabar which formed a part of the Madras Presidency.

#### **XV. Education in Madras Presidency**

During the early days of the British rule, education was left to the voluntary activities of the missionaries and the indigenous village school masters. The present system of education in Madras dates back to 1885, in which year, the Madras University was remodelled, a staff of local inspectors were appointed, the system of grants-in-aid was organised and several private institutions were brought under educational department. The reforms of 1871 led to the establishment of numerous elementary schools supported by local taxation.

The departmental institutions of Madras presidency in 1782 included twenty nine arts colleges (number of pupils 2112), three professional colleges (number of pupils 217), ninety four English high schools for boys (pupils 6045), 720 middle schools for boys (pupils 21,203), sixteen high schools for girls (pupils seventy six), 107 middle schools for girls (pupils 900), 1558 English teaching primary schools for boys (71,264) pupils, 14,284 Vernacular primary schools for boys (pupils 316,075), 011 English teaching primary schools for girls (pupils 5078) 522 Vernacular primary schools for girls (21,592 pupils), thirty six normal schools for masters (978 pupils), ten professional and technical schools with 597 pupils and four normal schools for mistresses.<sup>28</sup>

To conclude, by 1947, the British had introduced the modern system of education in India which was 150 years old. Indians were brought into contact with

scientific and industrial development, social and political philosophy of the west, as a result, Indian mind was freed from old superstitions and blind ideas. The British system of education had initiated a renaissance in Indian life which led to scientific and critical study of India's cultural heritage and to the rediscovery of her ancient arts of painting, architecture and sculpture. It had resulted in the enrichment of modern Indian languages and the development and revival of humanistic trends. Finally awakening of India and her freedom struggle was largely due to modern education. Indian education had thoroughly been reconstructed in the beginning of nineteenth century. Though the British empire had remained as a part of the permanent heritage of the Indians, it had broken down the barriers of old superstitious beliefs.

Surveying the whole thing, one has to see that the British system of education was not free from defects. Its major weakness was the absence of a public system of instruction. Education was for the elite and the colonial system remained alien imparting literacy to a few and the knowledge to the elite in a foreign tongue creating a class of people who could be relied upon to maintain and strengthen the British *Rāj*. This system suppressed the originality of thinking and the urge to creativity among the Indians. It was limited in scope, rigid in character and alien in concept. It had catered to the needs of the intellect accompanied by a neglect of manual skills. Handicrafts had continued through transmission of skills from generation to generation with out any formal training in a technical institute.

The British rulers of the day did not wish to transplant European education on Indian soil. Though the English East India company in the early years of the nineteenth century made a start by providing funds for public instruction, it was

reserved for Oriental learning with special emphasis on the study of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. Though some of the British rulers did not like the idea of imparting western education to Indian students, it was the Christian missionaries and non official Indians who took the initiative of establishing schools and colleges by imparting education of western type to Indians.

Another defect of the system of education the British had imparted in India was that it was too narrow in quality and quantity. Only a small percentage of eligible pupils got the benefits of schooling. Even those who had the fortune of going to schools and later to colleges were severely restricted in the choice of their subjects. The syllabus was over weighed and burdened with purely literacy education neglecting science and technology totally. Curriculam was also rigid and circumscribed and the small minority who received education was drawn away from agriculture, industry and commerce. It had also tendered to develop a bias against manual labour of every type. Its most important aspect was however the political fact of foreign domination of a subject people, whose culture was rejected in favour of an alien system to preserve and promote imperial rule. The sense of superiority and the attitude of arrogance making the decision in favour of western learning through the medium of English language imposed a character on the new system of education from which it continued to suffer during the British rule.

In course of time, some small concessions were made in favour of native learning and the spread of literacy contributed inevitably to the growth of Indian languages. But the content of education from the elementary stage of mere literacy to higher education comprising largely English literature and western sci-

ences remained unaltered. A new class of structure worse than the old caste hierarchy gave rise to divisions and inequalities in society. These limitations of the system which a foreign domination had placed on the intellectual life of the people which had blocked the progress and national unity was noticed early by educationists and reformers and several committees and commissions were set out to rectify the situation as we have already noticed and analysed in this chapter.

Nevertheless taking into account the benefits of the English educational system which had brought on the Indian society and systems as a whole, one could understand its defects are minor and few and even negligible.

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