Chapter 8
CONCLUSION

In an overview on the status of children in the colonial Punjab, this work has focused on their demographic profile, child marriage, education, children in the customary law and concerns of the government for children, in an attempt to understand the ‘world of children’. The study explores the colonial government’s measures, to mould and improve the life of children by introducing innovations through health measures, and legislation restoring the right to life for the girl child, through the Prevention of Female Infanticide Act, restraining child marriages, providing work apprenticeship, introducing a reformatory schools system, initiating child labour laws and compulsory education schemes. These measures however, did not bring about any major change in the lives of children; rather these were minor modifications and that too at a very slow pace remaining on the periphery of almost all aspects of life for this young category of society.

The proportion of children in the colonial Punjab ranged from 35 percent in 1868 to 40 percent in 1931. From 1868 onwards, there was a gradual rise in the proportion of children but 1911 showed a sudden drop to 35.71 percent to the total population. In the Census of 1931 a substantial spurt to almost 41 percent of children was seen, which might be attributed to the epidemics in the former and somewhat improved health services in the case of the latter. In the period of colonial rule therefore, the population of children in the region increased by 6 percent only.

This population of children was however, unevenly distributed over the entire province. In 1868, the highest proportion of children was found in Delhi and Ferozepur districts and the central parts, whereas
the Simla and Rawalpindi areas had the lowest proportions. Most of the north-west and central districts had an above average proportion of children. The Rohtak, Karnal, Ambala, Jullundur, Ludhiana and Multan districts had less than the average of the province i.e., below 35 percent. By 1931, the overall proportion of children had increased in all districts except Kangra, which had a decline of 7 percent. At this time too, districts with an above average proportion of children included the western parts of the Punjab, however some parts of the south-east such as Hissar, Rohtak and Gurgaon also had high proportion of children by this time. The Central parts of the Punjab were slightly below the provincial average in this respect. The lowest proportion was still at Simla, Kangra and Rawalpindi. It emerges that not much change had taken place in the distribution of children over time. Although, no clear cut pattern of distribution is discernable but, largely the western parts of the province had a higher proportion of children in their population as compared to the denser eastern portions of the province, a position that was maintained over time.

Census information also reflects a higher proportion of children among Muslims in comparison to other religious communities in the Punjab. In 1891, for instance, the ratio of children in the total Muslim population, stood at 46 percent while among Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Zorastrians the corresponding proportions were 39, 38, 34 and 32 percent respectively. Christians had the lowest proportion at 27 percent. By 1931 there was no change in the proportion of children among Hindus which remained at 39 percent. A larger variation can be seen in the Christian community, which showed a rise from 27 percent to 43 percent, a rise of about 16 percent. The proportion of Sikh children also rose from 38 to 40 percent since 1891. Among the Muslims the proportion of children was higher than the other communities at 42
percent but had become slightly less than the proportion among Christians and Ad-dharmis by this time. During the colonial period the number of children in Sikhs, Jains and Christians communities had increased, while among Muslims, Buddhists and Zorastrians the number of children had declined.

Similar variations are also identified in relation to the sex ratio among children. In 1881 the disparity of girls to boys was 844 girls per 1000 boys, which improved to 851 by 1891, and 854 in 1901. In 1911, this ratio was static at 854 after which followed a decline to 828 in 1921 and an eventual increase to 831 in 1931 and 846 by 1941. Over the colonial period thus, there was practically no improvement in the sex ratio. At the district level, we find that in 1868, Montgomery and Sialkot showed the largest difference in the ratio of boys to girls at 24:13 percent and 22:15 percent respectively. Most districts reflect this disparity at 3 percent only. The least difference was in Simla and Rawalpindi district at 1 percent only, these districts incidentally also had the lowest proportion of children. By 1931, most of the districts had a disparity of 2-3 percent, a negligible decrease being seen in some areas. The districts with a higher difference between girls and boys at 4 percent were Dera Ghazi Khan, Ludhiana, Sialkot and Sheikhupura at 22:18, 22:18, 23:19 and 24:20 respectively. Simla had a ratio of 12:11 of boys : girls and Kangra an equal number of the sexes. Surprisingly, Jullundur and Rawalpindi had a higher proportion of girls in 1931 i.e., 20:21 an 17:19. This change could be the result of the efforts to combat female infanticide in Jullundur.1

From a community perspective, Christians had the lowest disparity in sex ratio being at 13:12.6 in 1891 and Sikhs and Muslim had highest

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1 However, the Census Report Punjab 1931, records, 666 in 1911, 685, in 1921 and 749 in 1931 per 1000 boys. For comparison see- Chapter on ‘Demographic Profile’ Census Tables figures and ‘Children and the State’. 
disparity at the ratio 22:16 and 24:18 respectively. Hindus had a ratio of 21:18 (boys : girls), Jains 19:17, Zorastrians 17:15 and Christians 13:12. By 1931, Buddhists had the lowest disparity in sex ratio among children at 15:15.6. However, in this Census the highest disparity was seen in the Zorastrians where boys formed 17 percent of the total population and girls only 11 percent. At this time the sex ratio among Sikh children had risen to 22:18, and among Hindu children had improved to 20:19, while the ratio for Muslim children remained the same as did for the Jains. In the colonial Punjab, the sex ratio of children did not improve much with time. However, the gap between girls and boys decreased by 0.5 percent. The ratios among Hindus and Sikhs improved and surprisingly 2 districts (Jullundur and Rawalpindi) actually came to have a slightly higher proportion of girls.

In the colonial period the rate of infant mortality in the Punjab was 31 percent i.e. 307/1000 children died before their first birthday. By 1930 this proportion declined to 154/1000 i.e., 15.4 percent. The Census information registered a decline by 16 percent in the infant mortality from 1901 to 1947. It may be attributed to the introduction of vaccination and western medicine along with maternity welfare services but primarily to the decline of the epidemics and fevers which had earlier ravaged the region.

Many of the children were married at a young age. However, the large portions of the western parts of the province had less incidence of child marriages, while the eastern districts showed a high proportion of married children. Further more, the proportions of child marriage in the south- eastern parts of the province became somewhat higher over the time. On the whole, the trend of child marriage was declining. In the eastern districts, for which information is also available in the Census of 1941 and 1951, this declining trend in the child marriage practice...
continued even further when a marginal 1 to 3 percent children were married.² Within the category of married children, Census information reveals that the largest proportion of child marriages was in the 10-15 age group, for example 51 percent of children who were married in the Rohtak district in 1891 were in this age group, which came down to 33 percent by 1931. This pattern was followed closely by many other districts. The practice of marrying girls at a very young age was more sought after as 73 percent of girls were married in this 10-15 years category in 1891 age group, which remained at 61 percent even in the Census of 1931.

On the whole, the figures point towards a marked decline in the practice of marrying boys rather than girls, by 1941 the practice of marrying boys in this age group became almost negligible in many districts of the Eastern Punjab. Within the Punjab a higher proportion of married Hindu and Sikh girls were seen as compared to the other communities. It is interesting to note that the extent of early marriage was much larger amongst the menial castes than among the higher ones, and the proportion of married females was consequently, higher among the lower castes.

Thus, the fact emerges that the south-eastern parts of the province favoured child marriage more than the western portions. The considerable proportion of children was married in the age group of 10-15. Early marriage was preferred primarily in the case of the girl child. Child marriage practice was higher among the lower castes. In actual fact, however, the Punjab had a specific and strong practice of ‘muklava’ which delayed the consummation of marriage by several years at times. A child went through a marriage ceremony but did not join the marital family. This was therefore, child marriage in name. From 1881 to 1931

² Figures from Chapter on ‘Child Marriage’
the practice of child marriage in the colonial Punjab came down to half of the earlier proportion. The actual extent of child marriage thus was rather limited in this region during colonial times.

Another significant aspect related to children in the colonial Punjab was their education. A variety of schools existed in the province before annexation in the form of indigenous schools and these continued to function till the end of the 19th century and gradually gave its place to the modern system of education. Education imparted to pupils in indigenous schools was both religious and secular. Indigenous education however, was inadequate to meet the requirements of the new environment.

The British introduced a new western system of education largely to fulfill their own needs. By 1854 the goal of colonial authorities had shifted from ‘downward filtration theory’ to ‘education of masses’. Many efforts were made to bring the children from 6-11 years to schools. From 1861 to 1946 there was increase of 16 times in the enrolment of pupils in primary boys’ schools and strength of girls from 1916 to 1946 increased 5 times. By 1882 however, only 6.4 percent children of school going age i.e., 6-11 years were actually in school. In 1921 the number rose to 10 percent and in 1931 to 11.6 percent and by 1941 stood at 13 percent. In 1945-46 the number of school going children had doubled since 1941 that is 26 percent. The number of primary male schools rose from 1624 to 6331 between 1886 to 1946 thus, registering a fourfold growth. The number of primary female schools rose from 935 in 1917 to 2380 in 1946 i.e., a growth of slightly more than double.

The curriculum of the primary education changed with time according to the needs of the local population such as in Zamindari schools and rural schools. Some special school however, was set up by

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3 Figures from chapter on 'Education of Children'
the Christian missionaries for the education of low castes or depressed classes. Some efforts were made to increase the attendance of low caste children in the ordinary schools and the Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab for the year 1917-18 remarked that the ‘old-time prejudice was gradually disappearing’.

Many efforts were made by the colonial government to bring children of school going age to schools. In 1906 the government considered a scheme for the abolition of fees in all primary schools. The children of the agriculturists and village kamins were exempted from the payment of fees by article 234 of the Punjab Education Code, while article 235 authorised exemption, up to a limit of 10 percent of the total number on the rolls, in the case of boys whose parents were too poor to pay fees. In 1912 it was calculated that about two-thirds of the pupils in primary schools did not pay any fees.

The information on the primary schools in the region, points towards an immense growth in the institutions for primary education. Despite this growth both in the number of schools and enrollment of pupils in primary schools, there was a marked ‘wastage and stagnation’. In the case of girls there was 84 percent wastage and among the males 71 percent. This meant that the actual number of students who completed their basic education was rather low. Over eighty percent of children remained out of school. These children helped their parents in household works, fields or in the non-agricultural sector. They were ‘apprenticed’ in the respective profession of their fathers or forefathers within the family. Although the Government had established Zamindari schools or rural schools for the masses, attendance was low and sporadic. Children were supposed to help their parents at a tender age in agriculture they even worked in factories and mills. Education for children was thus, an unsuccessful attempt from the present
perspective. The input far outweighed the output as a majority of children remained outside the sphere of education.

The life of children was more or less governed through social norms and discipline laid down by customary law in the Punjabi society. These varied customary laws were related to betrothal, marriage, inheritance, adoption, guardianship and illegitimacy. The child’s future marriage age, choice of life partner and his social milieu remained in the hands of the father, mother or father’s family, who took decisions in accordance with custom. The working of these laws was governed by religious and social background, but usually took on the local colour.

In the customary laws, betrothal was a very important ceremony in childhood. The right to betroth a child was in the father’s hand, and in his absence, the mother or elder brother, or paternal relations; grandfather or uncle had the preferential right. The girls did not have the right to contract their own betrothal whereas boys had this right, but its use was not generally appreciated. The age of betrothing a child varied with sub-region, tribal and religious backgrounds, usually ranging from 5 among the Gujjars of Ropar to 12 to 14 years of age among the Lahore district Rajputs. There were many coded instances in the customary law, when the children were married from ages 3 onwards. Hence, there was no cut off age for betrothal and of marriage in the customary laws. The contract of betrothal was revocable in some circumstances. The betrothal of a girl held more importance as it was generally in the hands of family and much more binding on them, than on boys. Nearly the same principles were followed for the marriage ceremony. While making alliances there were some general customs of angas or arms, but they were not strictly followed. Thus, customary law endorsed early betrothal and early marriage in the colonial period keeping with in the patriarchal structure.
Another important issue which related to the life of the child was inheritance. In the customary law only the legitimate sons could sometime inherit. Among the legitimate sons, some areas followed the law of equal sharing, while others had a rule of giving some extra share to the eldest son. Girls were generally excluded from inheriting ancestral property however, they had better claims over the self acquired property of their fathers. For ancestral property they were excluded by the brothers in the first instance and in the case of a sonless proprietor by the collaterals. This rule was applied mainly to Hindus, among Muslims however, it was generally not the case. Daughters were given maintenance in case they remained unmarried; furthermore she could inherit if she lived in her fathers’ house after her marriage. Illegitimate sons had no right to inherit the property of his father however; he was given maintenance up to a certain age limit in some areas. The responsibility of his bringing up lay in the mother and mother’s family. An illegitimate son could be legitimized by the father’s approval and in practice there were some instances where illegitimate son’s inherited equally according to the customary law of the district.

There was also provision for the adoption of a child, usually a son by a sonless proprietor. The adoption was permitted within the family or within the tribe, in other words there were tribal limitations on adoption. In the event of adoption of a son outside one’s own tribe, purely personal relations were established between the adopter and adopted son, by which some barriers was imposed on inheritance of the ancestral property by the adopted son. The adopted son had the right to inherit the property of the adoptive as well as the natural father and there were many instances for the same. Among the Hindus adoption was irrevocable but for Muslims it was not of that character. In the customary law provisions were to adopt a son only; however the adoption

323
of daughter's son was no bar. Interestingly in the hill areas the custom of adopting a son-in-law was also in vogue.

In the event of the death of the natural guardian (father) the customary law, placed the minor child and his/her property, in the hands of the mother, elder brother, grandfather or paternal uncles. In addition to person and property of the minor, betrothal of a girl held importance. For the guardianship, customary law was at times singularly vague or inefficient to solve the issue at the time of the guardianship of the minor. Eventually the colonial government enacted the Guardian and Wards Act 1890. In many cases the colonial court used its jurisprudence while deciding the cases and mostly with a view to look after the welfare of the minor.

Thus, the customs functioned to protect the basic interests of the child and regulated his or her family environment and upbringing. These provisions differed according to sub-region, tribal and religious background and more so to location as the local effect prevailed. In addition to it, these were encroached upon by the colonial state. Along with customary provisions for children the colonial government tried to restructure the life of this category, and thereby entered the arena of childhood.

In the colonial period, many social measures were taken both within the family for the health and family life of children and in the external or outside milieu of the family. The health of children was generally looked after by traditional methods. The first significant health measure came with the passing of the Vaccination Act by the last quarter of the 19th century. Prohibition of Tobacco among Juveniles Act was introduced in the province by 1918. By the second decade of the 20th century a new development came about with the opening up of Maternity and Child Welfare centers. Simultaneously, the medical inspection of
school children was also initiated. For the family life of the children the first Act was for the Prohibition of Female Infanticide which came in the second half of the 19th century and Age of Consent Act by the end of 19th century which was related to the personal life of a female child as affect of which was significant on the health of the female due to pre-mature consummation of marriage. In the 2nd quarter of the 20th century the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed. These Acts initiated changes in the traditional life of the child within the family unit and brought about a new consciousness about health and protection of children.

For the life of children outside the family the first Act passed was Apprentice Act 1850 in the mid 19th century to meet the demand for legislating on apprenticing of poor orphan and vagrant children for trade and crafts, between the ages 10-18 years. Later on the vagrant or juvenile offenders were provided reformatory schools for such type of training by the end of 19th century. By the first quarter of the 20th century the Indian Factory Act framed some rules and regulations for delimitation of the age and hours of work for children. Direct provision for the welfare of children was also made in the Children Pledging of Labour Act II of 1933 and Employment of Children Act XXVI of 1938. Simultaneously, primary education had been gaining ground with the Indian Education Commission 1882. In the first half of the 20th century the Compulsory Education Schemes of 1919 and 1940 were initiated for children between 6-11 years of age. These Acts regulated the life of children outside the family and introduced the need for control over the labour and education of children.

The first public health measure was the Vaccination Act, which was passed in order to immunize children against small-pox. The total number of vaccination operation performed increased from just 72,846 in 1854 to 4,295,239 in 1944 i.e., an increase of nearly 60 times. As a
result it reduced mortality by attempting the eradication of small pox disease. Another, Act related to health of children was the Juvenile-Smoking Act 1918. Although no exact statistics of the prevalence of this practice are available, the implications of the Act and convictions accordingly showed that this Act could not produce the desired results and was soon lost in smoke. Another health measure was the maternity and child welfare work which was started at this time with the help of Non-Governmental Organizations, working for this purpose. Such as the Victoria Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Lady Chelmsford League. The number of maternity and child welfare centers rose from 25 in 1925 to 102 by 1935. The impact of these measures was that infant mortality reduced from 307/1000 in 1901 to 154/1000 by 1947. Along with it, the colonial government introduced the medical inspection of school children by 1926-27. This was introduced in order to know the physical conditions of children, and providing necessary aids in the event of epidemics. The questions related to ventilation, lighting, drinking water-supply and general sanitation were also raised in the school premises, bringing about thus, a new awareness to the issues related to health of children.

The Female Infanticide Prevention Act can be seen as the restoration of the right to life of the ‘female infants’ in the colonial period. The Act was applied to the selected villages or areas where the practice was most suspected. The modes like persuasion and controlling the marriage expenses were adopted. Registration of births, deaths and marriage were made compulsory in the areas where this Act was applied. In the event of the breach of these rules, the person was liable to be imprisoned or fined or both. As a result the sex ratio improved
considerably, especially in the case of Jullundur, where the number of girls exceeded that of boys by 1931.4

In the mid 19th century a demand arose for legislating on the apprenticeship of poor and orphan as well as for vagrant children for trade and crafts between ages 10-18 years. Unfortunately we have no data related to the implications of the Apprentice Act 1850 in India and Punjab as well. However, this concern led to the first enactment, on Juvenile Justice in India by the initiation of the Apprentice Act of 1850, which required that the vagrant children between the ages of 10-18 be provided vocational training as part of their rehabilitation process. This Act was replaced by the Reformatory Schools Act in 1897. The Reformatory Schools Act, 1897 introduced separate institutions for juveniles but was limited only to those juvenile offenders who were sentenced to a term of imprisonment and were in the opinion of the Magistrate, fit to be sent to a Reformatory School. Despite having a large and well equipped Reformatory School in the province, the admission of juvenile offenders into jails continued. It was largely due to the rules regulating admission to the Reformatory Schools which were framed with undue stringency. These Acts therefore, were limited in their impact and barely brought about any improvement as envisaged in their drafting. They were merely ‘paper’ Acts on the periphery of the world of the child.

The Indian Factories Acts 1881, 1891, 1911, 1922 and 1934 were passed in succession mainly to remove the shortcomings in the preceding Acts and improve the conditions of labour in India. Provisions were also made for the protection of women and children among labourers. Labour of the children was frequently used in the agriculture sector and the government establishments, in the last quarter of the 19th century Zamindari school had been opened in the province to enable

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4 See Table 2.13 page 56 Chapter on 'Demographic Profile'
children to carry on with their part time work along with their studies. Children were employed in a large variety of factories in the Punjab, but their number was marginal as compared to their work in the agriculture sector. The use of child labour in factories was sporadic. So the labour legislation had only a limited impact on the children in the Punjab region. Child labour was used mainly in the carpet factory at Amritsar. The Indian Factory Acts tried to help children through controlling the working hours and putting age barriers on child workers.

The pledging of labour of children was dealt in the Children Pledging of Labour Act II of 1933 especially for the Punjab after the Report of the Royal Commission on Labour. Its implications were for the carpet factory of Amritsar where the pledge (a form of bonded labour) was generally used. However, this Act could not gain success due to inherent weakness in the Act itself as the agreement was generally oral and no proof of the agreement was generally available. Since the penalty was laid down in the Act for both the employer and the guardian, the document never came to the surface. Another Act directly related to child labour was Employment of Children Act XXVI of 1938. The Act provided that no child who had not completed his fifteenth year could be employed or permitted to work in any occupation connected with the transport of goods. Also no child under twelve year could be allowed to work in any factory set forth in the schedule of the Act. Disputes regarding the age of the particular child was to be referred to the prescribed medical authority by the inspector of a factory. Whosoever employed a child under the age of 15 years was likely to be punished with a fine which could extend to five hundred rupees. However, the prosecutions could be lodged under the Act only by the previous sanction of the Inspector appointed under the Act. These Acts therefore, once again, brought limited immediate results due to laxity in implementation but
contributed to the overall awareness about the check on the use of child labour.

The only way to keep the children away from labour was the application of compulsory education which was not seen as suitable at that time. The idea of voluntary compulsion too, had failed in India due to the backwardness of the local bodies and their incompetence to enforce compulsion on the masses. Even when they decided to enforce it, they contended themselves with merely passing resolutions by 2/3rd majority and then sleeping over them. The members of the School Attendance Committee generally belonging to that local area and were therefore appointed by the Government for implementing the education programmes. They were, mostly, illiterate people, and did not know much about the responsibility they were shouldering. These local people did not, moreover, want to earn the displeasure of their friends and relatives who also belonged to that local area by initiating action against them for not sending their children to school. By 1940 the powers of local bodies were being retained; similar powers were being vested in the Government but due to the uncertain political conditions of that time these measures could not gain ground. Another major hindrance in the implementation of the education schemes was the lack of financial resources for the extension of the Act. By 1923-24, the Act was applied to 59 rural areas and 7 urban areas. Its growth in urban as well rural areas doubled than that of the previous year by 1925-26. Gradually, the provisions of the Act were applied to some other rural areas. By 1945-46, nearly 11007 rural areas and 68 urban areas were under so called Compulsion of education.

The Punjab Primary Education Act of 1919 made no compulsion for girl's education, but the Act 1940 was applicable to both boys and girls. In the case of boys, those not under 6 years and not over 12 years and in the case of girls at the age from 6 to 11 years came under the purview of the Act. Compulsion of Education for girls did not succeed at
all. In 1946-47, for example, there was no area, urban or rural, under compulsion for girls and enrolment of girls in the compulsory areas was, therefore, nil. Even if a few guardians or employer were brought to book for the offence of not sending their children to school, the punishments were not sufficiently heavy to make them realize the gravity of the offence. Fines imposed were not deterrent enough as they ranged from 5 rupees to 25 rupees even when they were realized, as was not the case in most instances.

Despite compulsion, primary education could not make a headway. Once literacy was acquired by a child of school-going age, the changing environments generally made him out of touch with education and he lapsed into illiteracy in the course of time. The legislation did not incorporate facilities of rural libraries and reading rooms. Lastly, both the Acts of 1919 and 1940 were silent about the problem of the children belonging to depressed classes. Despite governmental efforts, very little change was seen or the lives of children. Children remained in their traditional positions, married early, lacked literacy and continued as work’ hands. Some progress was made where the health’s of children was concerned. This too, however, was restricted to ‘awareness’ rather than any concrete change at the ground levels.

In order to have a complete perspective of the status of children in the Punjab and its relation to society and state it would be necessary to place the region in a comparative framework and view it in the context of other provinces in colonial India. The Punjab province in some ways was similar to the sub-continent as a whole, but on certain aspects reflects a variation from the overall norm.

Colonial India and Punjab had almost the same proportion of children in their population increasing from 35 to 40 percent over the time. Child proportion in India increased by 5 percent while that of Punjab by 6 percent during this period. The Punjab was among the provinces of India having a higher proportion of children. Along with
Punjab, Assam, Bengal, Cochin, Travancore, and Rajputana Agency, had above 40 percent population of children by 1931. The areas which had below the 40 percent mark were Ajmer-Merwara, Agra and Oudh, Bihar and Orissa, Bombay, Central Provinces and Berar, Coorg, Delhi, Madras, United Provinces and Baroda. The largest proportion of children in 1931 was found in Tranvancore and Orissa State at 43 percent. At the second level was cochin with 42 percent children. The Punjab was at the third position along with Bengal and Rajputana Agency in its child population.

In the country and in the Punjab region Muslims had the largest proportion of children in their population. By 1931 however, while the number of Muslim children increase marginally in India, in the Punjab their numbers had declined by 4 percent since 1881. Between 1901 and 1931, there was no significant difference in the proportions of disparity of girls to boys, we find a major difference. Whereas for India the range was from 924 in 1881 to 937 in 1931, for the Punjab the corresponding proportion was 817 and 854. In this context available figures on the other states such a Assam, Bombay, Central Provinces and Berar, Madras and United Provinces had the ratio of above 900 communities in India and the Punjab Province. However, for the female per 1000 boys from 1891 to 1911. Thus, disparity of girls to boys was higher in the Punjab. Further in the context of religion, in India the Muslims had a smaller proportion of girls as compared to Hindus whereas in the Punjab it was the reverse.

5 Proportion of children by Religion 1901-1931

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Punjab Hindus Muslims Sikhs

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6 Figures from the chapter on 'Demographic Profile'.

331
In the Punjab province the infant mortality rate was higher in comparison to the sub-continent between 1892 and 1930, when the highest mortality at one point of time touched 260 per mille. The infant mortality rate in Assam had the same as that of British India. The rate of lowest mortality was in the Provinces of Bihar and Orissa, Bengal and Madras at 230 per mille while, North Western Frontier Province at 240 per 1000. On the other hand United Provinces and Oudh at 350, Delhi 430, Central Provinces and Berar at 440 had a much higher degree of Infant deaths at any one point of time during the period. Bombay presidency and Punjab had the same infant mortality rate at 300, thus being at middling level in all India position.

In the colonial period the prevalence of child marriage in India ranged from 10 percent to 18 percent at different points of time. In the Punjab however, this range was only 6 to 12 percent, and declined further over time. The provinces and states below the average of Punjab were Assam, Balucistan, Mysore State, Madras State, and North Western Frontier Province at 1-4 percent by 1931, as against the 6 percent for Punjab while other provinces were above this mark at the maximum of 20 percent for Bihar and Orissa and Central Provinces and Berar. Child marriage in the Punjab was at an average level as compared to British India. When viewed at the level of the age categories of children it becomes clear that children in different age groups had a varying incidence of marriage and lower proportion in the Punjab region as compared to India. In 1911 the 0-5 years category, in colonial India shows an incidence of about 1 percent while the Punjab was less than half of that. In the 5-10 year group in India 9 percent children were married in Punjab however, had only 3 percent of such marriages. The group of 10-15 years however does not show a wide gap as in India it was

7 Census of India Report 1931. Graph on Infant Mortality Per Mille of Live Births in British India And Provinces From 1892-1931.94
17 percent and in the Punjab 13 percent. The position by 1931 in the first two categories was much the same while in the 10-15 year group child marriages had increased in British India to 27 percent, a jump of 10 percent, in the Punjab this was of 2 percent increase only. On the whole, Punjab had a smaller proportion of married children; this variation was more obvious in the 0-10 year ages at less than half i.e., 1/3 while at the 10-15 year group the difference of the province from that of the country was more than half i.e., 2/3 for the Punjab and India respectively.

Education at primary level in Punjab as compared to India shows a disparate picture. The growth of primary institutions in the Province was higher than the Indian sub-continent. In India is almost doubled between 1891 and 1927, whereas in the case of Punjab the increase was nearly fourfold. In the case of growth of enrollment among pupils the proportion was 3:4 times for India and Punjab respectively. But the actual position of Punjab in enrollments in the primary education was much below the country's level in 1881 this ratio was 6.4:8.56 (Punjab :India), in 1921 this ratio was 10:20 and by 1946 it was 26:45 percent i.e., the gap between Punjab and India increased with time. In 1882, the lowest proportion of pupils in schools was in North-Western Provinces and Central Provinces but by 1921 it was the province of Punjab which had lowest proportion of school going children.

The colonial State was not directly concerned with the children in India, nor did children fit into the scheme of imperialism. The attempts of the government relating to the lives of children were the consequence of external pressure, as in the case of labour, or sporadic efforts at social welfare. The State had an ambiguous attitude towards children, at times contradictory with an absence of any concerted policy towards the child.
Therefore, despite, the concerns of the colonial government it could not bring about any major change with their legal measures due to their compartmentalized and limited efforts, but the initiative, taken cannot be undermined. The colonial situation did not permit many other issues such as child trafficking, child prostitution and abandoned children to be seriously taken up at that time. Consequently, the State could not act as an agent of change in the lives of children.