Modern India is an edifice built by many hands. Her culture is a curious combination of a range of legacies bequeathed by those who governed the destinies of India for centuries together. It is, however, to the British that she owes to a considerable extent her process of modernization. Among many others, one of the major and modern contributions of the British was the foundation of a regular system of education in our country. This, however, they achieved not without difficulties. The way was conspicuously unsmooth and certain limitations always came in the way. Their approach to the people at large was casual. Their knowledge of the nature, customs and prejudices of the natives was imperfect. It was never possible under these unfavorable circumstances to lay the foundation of a perfect system of education in the first instance. Out of the process of trial and error, a welter of experiments and controversies was at last born the nucleus of our modern system of education.

The history of education in India in the modern sense is no doubt, the direct legacy of the British rule. But it remains an incontestable truism that in the ancient times the Indian tradition was fairly rich in education. A cursory glance at its cultural horizon obviously reveals that all through the centuries, this land has been a nursery of art and science, a cradle of literature and philosophy, a store house of unique knowledge-a fact which bears testimony to the existence of a rational system of education, unparalleled in the annals of the ancient world. The
immediate aim of education, however, was to prepare the different castes of people for their actual needs of life.¹

Punjab was no exception to what was happening in India as a whole. The idea of education was not new to the people of Punjab. Each of the three main communities, the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs, inhabiting this province, had its own system of education. Such a system was based essentially on the religious tenets of each community.

In the ancient period of history, the education system had no organization behind it. Its strength lay in its being a spontaneous social activity and was in no way a state responsibility. It received bounteous aid from the Rajas and high officials, who gave donations for this purpose in their individual capacities. But it is understandable that no culture can, however, survive through centuries unless it develops a stable, balanced and self-sufficient political system to uphold it. Naturally cracks and breakdowns occurred at intervals, whenever famine, epidemics, wars and invasions devastated particular regions. This process of education, which could hardly be called a system, suffered a setback on the eve of Muslim conquest. In those days, there were three kinds of Hindu education institutions - Tols, Pathsalas and Lande Mahajani. Each school was concerned with preparing boys to fulfill the duties of their particular vocation in life.

The permanent settlement of the Muslims in the province brought about the establishment of mosque which besides being centers of religious worship were also institutions of religious instruction. These institutions wholly depended upon the assistance of the royal patrons or on the donations of the faithful devotees. Wherever patronage was not forthcoming, these institutions easily came to a naught. Moreover, the

¹ F.W. Thomas. The History of Prospects of British Education in India, New Delhi, N.D., p. 1.
successive Muslim invasions from the North-West and consequent horrors of bloodshed proved a great setback to the education of the province. Consequently, in the Muslim period, “But the character of education remained fluctuating and uncertain”.  

During the days of the Sikh supremacy in the Punjab, education as state function received scant attention. The Sikh rulers did not consider the question of imparting education to their subject. “To protect their subjects against foreign invasions was considered by them a duty, to educate them only a wish though pious”.  

The Sikhs were primarily a race of warriors who were hemmed in on all sides by a variety of foes. Ranjit Singh indeed gave the land a span of peace for about thirty years but the Sikh power chiefly rested upon an efficient military organization. Thus he hardly had any time to make much impact upon the cultural development of the Punjab. Education in his period was not a state responsibility. In fact, it was true of the greater part of the world, not merely of the Punjab.

Though Ranjit Singh did not get much time to develop education yet as an individual, he was favorably disposed to literary activities in the state. He was no doubt, “a military genius who ushered in an era of peace, a period of transition from the middle ages to modern times. Nevertheless, he was an enlightened ruler and a great patron of learning and art”.  

He issued his commands in Punjabi language, which were later translated by his courtiers into Persian and then read back to the

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Towards the closing years of his reign, Ranjit Singh had also realized the necessity and importance of the Western education system. Just as he had made progress in the field of military organization by following the western ideas, so did he want to benefit from western ideas in the field of education too? He made arrangements of English education for some of the princes. English signatures of Kanwar Sher Singh are extant. It is also believed that Kanwar Partap Singh could speak English fluently.

As regards mass education, the school was an institution which a village community was expected to maintain as a matter of course. Schools were generally attached to mosques, temples or Dharamsalas. The classes were also held in the huts of Faqirs or at the houses of some wealthy persons. Occasionally the accountant engaged by a wealthy Zamindar in a village in order to teach his son also taught other boys of the village. Pathshalas, Quran schools and Gurmukhi schools were respectively Hindu, Muslim and Sikh institutions, chiefly or entirely devoted to religious teaching. In these schools elementary knowledge of Shastras was imparted; the Koran was repeated and learnt, chiefly by rote; Gurmukhi characters were taught and practiced in the study of the Holy Granth. Mahajani and Lande schools ministered to the needs of the trading community. In these schools, the Mian taught his young pupils mental arithmetic, particularly learning to count mentally, to keep business correspondence and Behi-Khata. Persian was the official language in both Mohammedan and Sikh times. “It was

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indeed the language of the literate the lingua-franca of the official class”.

The teachers were almost invariably Mohammedan but as in these schools teaching of Persian had a definite value in terms of livelihood and government employment, Hindus attended them as freely as Mohammedans Persian schools were considered by the British authorities, a few years later, to be “the most genuinely educational institutions in the country”.

The indigenous elementary schools in those days imparted to the people, at large, a wonderful training in three R’s - Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. This limited education could well meet the requirements of Zamindars and tillers of soil. These elementary schools gave instruction to the poor and needy people.

In short, with a few exceptions in which Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian were intelligently taught, the schools hardly fulfilled the cherished purpose of education. They could hardly be said to have any system at all. The subjects taught in them were either exclusively religious in character or were considered useless. Secular education was not given the importance it deserved.

“The education was almost stereotyped”. It was an inheritance which was passed inviolable from one generation to another. The teacher exercised no control over it. His guide was the ideals; he had inherited from his predecessors. He was not conscious of the fact that in the changing times, the urgent need was to evolve a new system of education. The result was that the old systems were adhered to in Toto.

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7 History of the Growth and Development of Western Education in Punjab 1846-1884, Monograph No. 5, Punjab Government Record Office, Lahore, 1929, p. 15.
9 Sanaullah Khan, op.cit., p. 25.
Thus the gaze of the pupils and consequently of the whole people was turned backward.\textsuperscript{10}

The teachers should not, however, be blamed exclusively for the unsatisfactory conditions which prevailed in the province. It was largely due to the want of an educational policy. In fact there was no fixed standard of education in the Punjab. "The education of that time was instruction by compartments, for a particular object, in Persian for service under government; in Arabic, Sanskrit, or Gurmukhi for religious purposes, in Lande Mahajani for trade".\textsuperscript{11} There was no concept of education as a common form or training to be given to all alike. The aim of education then was simply to teach children to read and write their own vernacular, to keep simple accounts, and to gain some knowledge of people and things outside their homes. But it appeared that there were lanes and by ways of education but no high road.\textsuperscript{12} Under these circumstances, the mental outlook of an average Punjabi inevitably was, ‘painfully narrow and circumscribed’.\textsuperscript{13} But these defects were more than compensated by one characteristic of these schools and that was the formation of an unblemished character. The education given took into consideration the practical needs of the pupils. ‘Respect for learning has always been the redeeming feature of the east’. To this the Punjab has formed no exception. Torn by invasion and civil war, it ever preserved and added to educational endowments. There was

\textsuperscript{11} J.C. Godley, Director of Public Instruction Punjab, Prefatory Note: See Arnold’s Report, on Public Instruction for the year 1856-57.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{13} H.R. Mehta, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 21.
not a mosque, a temple, a Dharamsala that has not a school attached to it, to which the youth flocked chiefly for religious education”.

Considering the circumstances in which they were working their efforts deserve praise. “The chief merit of the indigenous system of elementary schools was their adaptability to local environment and vitality and popularity they had earned by centuries of existence under a variety of economic conditions or political vicissitudes”. Moreover, there were no printed text-books, no state aid, no school buildings and the people in general were poor. The teachers had to work on starving wages. But this vast network of the elementary schools never received the attention it deserved, at the hands of the government. It gave a crippling blow to the indigenous system in 1849, when the province was annexed by the British.

There is no denying the fact that this indigenous system of education contained within itself those vital seeds which if properly guarded and well watered, would have developed into a national system of education. As Adams observed, these indigenous institutions “present the only true and sure foundations on which any scheme of general or national education can be established. We may deepen and extend the foundations, we may improve, enlarge, and beautify the super-structure, but these are definitely the foundations on which the building should be raised”. It is, indeed, an irony of fate that this indigenous system having such potentialities was miserably neglected by the educational legislators. They were or pretended to be, blind to its importance and

never handled it properly. “In spite of the best intentions, the most public-spirited officers and a generous Government that had the benefit of the traditions of other provinces, the true education of the Punjab was crippled, checked and nearly destroyed. The opportunities for its healthy revival and development were either neglected or perverted”.

Consequently, during the second half of the 19th century, on its ruins was erected the edifice of the modern system of education. The nationalists felt that education in India under the British rule was “first ignored, later the indigenous system was violently opposed, then organized on the western pattern. It appears that the British forgot the fundamental fact about education that it cannot be ordered like a cake but is a slow process of growth, growing in its own peculiar and particular soil. Whatever the British did for their own educational system in England, the same stock and barrel were introduced in this country of different soil climate”.

In 1830s the atmosphere was charged with the orientalists vs occidentalists controversy. The people of the Punjab wanted the ancient Indian system to be recognized and developed. On the other hand, men like Charles Grant and Macaulay wanted to wipe off the then prevailing indigenous system and desired to introduce western pattern of education. He wanted the limited funds at the disposal of the government to be used for creating a class between the government and the masses. He talked of creating a class, “who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in opinion and intellect”. The third view sought the mean between the two extremes. It was the synthesis of the two cultures,

20 Sasmuel A. Raj, India’s Educational Policy, New Delhi, 1984, p. 16.
preserving all that is good in the oriental system and superimposing upon it all that was good in the western system. This view found good exponents among enlightened Indian like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and liberal Englishmen like Colonel Jervis who said, “If the people are to have a literature, it must be in a great degree European, but it must be freely interwoven with homespun materials and the fashion may be Asiatic”. Unfortunately, the importance of the golden mean was not adequately realized by our educational administrators. Ultimately ideas of the substitution of western culture for eastern culture became more dominant. Macaulay gave a powerful stimulus to the cause of English education through his famous Minute on Education of February 1835. in this document, he marshaled all the eloquence at his command to demolish the arguments of the orientalists. On 7 March, 1835, barely a month after Macaulay had penned his Minute; he put an end to the protracted controversy over the relative merits of western and oriental education by ruling out that the “great object of the British Government in India was henceforth to be the promotion of European literature and science through the medium of English language”. His contempt and also his lack of ignorance is depicted in his utterances for the Sanskrit and Arabic, when he said, “a single shelf of good European Library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia”.

Consequently, Lord William Bentinck’s Government issued a communiqué, wherein it was stated that “the great object of the British Government ought to be the popularization of European literature and science among the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated

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for the purpose of education would be best deployed on English education alone. Annie Besant was critical of Macaulay's Minute and called it a subtle way of denationalizing a country. She compared Macaulay's policy in India with the policy Russia followed in Poland. She said,

Let me remark here that it is interesting to note that England largely, though not entirely, followed in her educational policy that of Russia in Poland. The Polish language was forbidden in schools, and Russian was the language employed just as English is employed here. Autocrats of all nations most resemble each other.

A. Samuel Raj also wrote in the same strain, "Lord Macaulay, even aimed at the cultural conquest of India through education". In 1844, a proclamation was issued in which it was said that for services in public offices, preference should be given to those who were educated in English schools. In consequence, the education imparted in the English schools became a passport for entrance into government services. Henceforth education was imparted with the limited objective of preparing pupils to join the services and not for life.

Thus, this was a period of experiments and controversies rather than achievements. Different policies, different agencies and different objects were proposed and practiced. The time had now approached to form a constant, uniform and comprehensive educational policy in the light of a thorough review of the past.

The opportunity was provided in Punjab for the same. With the advent of the British Rule in 1849, education entered a new phase. In

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25 Shamsuddin, op.cit., p. 166.
27 Ibid.
28 A. Samuel Raj, op.cit., p. 106.
the Punjab, English education came a little later as it was the last to be annexed by the British Government. The effect upon education of this rather later entry into the British Dominion was very peculiar. The principal educational aims and the fundamental principles of the educational policy of the government had already been formulated. Education had already made rapid strides in other provinces. The initial efforts for the spread of the western education here were made by the Missionaries, who were verily, “the pioneers of education in the Punjab”. They started schools with two-fold purpose, viz; for instructing Anglo-Indian and Christian children and for preaching Christianity. “The type of education offered in Presbyterian schools, like other schools under Christian sponsorship, was determined by their evangelistic aim”. They were granting western education in the English language to people from economic stratum and enabled them to enjoy employment opportunities equal to those of boys with more money. “Thus the missionaries used education not as an end in itself, but as a means to evangelization”. Sir John Lawrence who ruled the Punjab after it was annexed to the British Empire, was a zealous supporter of Christian missions and contributed to them annually a sum of Rs. 500/- out of his own pocket. Hence the conquest of the Sikh dominion was followed by several conversions to Christianity. There were no fewer than four schools of a higher category conducted and almost entirely maintained by Christian missionaries.

The first government school in the Punjab was opened at Simla in 1848 by Mr. Edwards, which was followed by the establishment of 13

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29 H.R. Mehta, op.cit., p. 15.
31 Ibid., p. 155.
32 S.N. Mukherji, History of Education in India, Baroda, 1951, p. 5.
33 H.R. Mehta, op.cit., p. 15.
district schools up to 1849. The government schools were established at Amritsar, Rawalpindi, Shahpur, Jhelum and Jullundur up to 1854. These efforts were aided by government officials and a few enlightened Indians. They used their sources to spread knowledge and to encourage the study of the English language and literature. As a result of the combined efforts of these three sets of workers, namely missionaries, government and enlightened Indians, the educational system gained popularity for several reasons. The British people of the Victorian era believed that their language, literature and educational methods were best in the world and India could do no better than to adopt them in Toto. Secondly, the Indians of this period, on their part were dazzled by their first contact with western civilization and they began to think that they could not do anything better than to imitate the British models. Thirdly, the system attained great popularity and importance because the young men educated under it were freely employed in government service. Therefore, the old indigenous system of education gradually disappeared and the new system of education which aimed at the spread of western knowledge through the medium of English language was firmly established in its place.\textsuperscript{34}

Soon after, the British Government seriously took up the cause of education. At the time of renewal of the Charter in 1853, a select committee was appointed to conduct a comprehensive enquiry into the educational activities of the past. And on the basis of this enquiry, it was decided to form the future policy in this field. It was felt that “for the first time, the Parliament of Great Britain investigated seriously and sympathetically the development of Indian education”.\textsuperscript{35} A critical examination was made of the educational policies, objects, methods and

\textsuperscript{34} Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. xiii-xiv.
agencies of the later years. The erroneous system prevailing before was amended, altered, supplemented and finally given modern look in the most elaborate Wood’s Despatch of 1854, called the ‘Magna Carta’ of English Education in India or ‘the Intellectual Charter in India’.

Eighty six years later, P. Hartog described it as ‘one of the most statesmen-like and most democratic document in the history of educational administration’. It contained a scheme of education, writes Lord Dalhousie, “for all India, far wider and more comprehensive than the local or the Supreme Government could even have ventured to suggest”. The Despatch indeed heralded a new era in the history of education in India. From the top to the bottom, from the universities to the elementary schools, the scheme left nothing untouched and dealt with each and every branch of education in a very judicious and effectual manner.

Following were the recommendations of the Despatch:

i. The construction of a separate department of administration for education;

ii. The establishment of institutions for training teachers for all classes of schools;

iii. The institution of universities at the presidency towns;

iv. The maintenance of the existing government colleges and high schools and to increase their numbers where and when necessary,

v. To give increased attention to vernacular schools for elementary education.

vi. The introduction of a system of grants-in-aid.

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36 The Despatch, 1854.
The attention of the government was specially directed to impart practical knowledge, which should be within the reach of the great mass of instruction in the higher branches and the vernaculars in the lower. English was to be taught wherever there was a demand for it, but it was not to be substituted for the vernacular languages of the country. To quote its original words, "It is neither our aim nor desire to substitute the English language for the vernacular dialects of the country. We have always been most sensible to the importance of the use of the languages which alone are understood by the great masses of population."

In spite of these declarations, the Deapatch upheld the superiority of western learning. "One can see the conflict between claims of government and claims of supremacy in the fact that vernacular education was necessary for needs of mass education but English was retained as the medium". Indeed it was noticeably less antagonistic to oriental learning than Macaulay had been twenty years before.

Wood's Despatch ushered in a novel era in the annals of education. "Worried and wearied with the evasive policy of the East India Company, the Board of Control under the guidance of a far sighted statesman, Sir Charles Wood, issued a memorable Despatch of 1854, which is known as the Great Charter of Education in India. It was regarded as "a bold farseeing and statesman like document". It marked out the foundations on which the edifice of Indian education has since been reared. But it may be noted that the laudable ideals of the Despatch were never honoured in complete observance. Some remained ineffective, others were partially carried out. Moreover, the revolt of 1857 aroused false doubts and alarms even about the clauses of the

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39 The Despatch of 1854, para 13, p. 9.
41 Annie Besant, Private Papers, N.M.M.L. New Delhi.
Despatch. Those who had disapproved of its principles got an opportunity to criticize it and laid the responsibility for the revolt at its door. Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, recorded a panicky dispatch, dated 28th April 1858, urging to reverse the policies laid down in the former Despatch. Fortunately, the instruction of this new Despatch, which aimed at cutting the throat of the liberal spirit of Wood’s Despatch were superseded by another one—Stanley’s Despatch of 1859, which reiterated the policy of Wood’s Despatch except in regard to the elementary education.  

Consequently, the recommendations of Wood’s Despatch were carried out throughout Indian provinces. Punjab, at this time was favorably placed for the inception of this new educational scheme. As already stated, Punjab being the last province to be annexed by the British Government, could avail of the wisdom gained in the sister province and it was spared the necessity of repeating the mistakes of the past. Up to February 1853, Punjab was under a Board of Administration. All this time the education of the province was under the care of the Judicial Commissioner, and all communications on the subjects from the various district and divisional officers to the Board or Chief Commissioner passed through him. This arrangement continued till September 1854, when at the request of the then Judicial Commissioner, the control of education was transferred to the Financial Commissioner. The subject of education occupied, therefore, the earnest attention of the government. It was ascertained that there was

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43 The grant-in-aid system had not proved successful in its application to the schools of lower class although, it had been freely availed of by those of higher class. It was therefore suggested in the Despatch of 1859, that the means of elementary education should be provided by the direct instrumentality of the officers of Government, Despatch of 1859, para 50. As quoted in Monograph No. 5. H.R. Mehta, op.cit., p. 26.
less prejudice and fewer elements of passive hindrance or active opposition here than elsewhere. The upper classes displayed a candid intelligence and inquisitiveness in respect of Asiastic learning and European sciences.45 The agricultural classes, too, were not hopelessly apathetic. Punjab was considered ripe for the introduction of an educational scheme. So much so that Lord Dalhousie in his Minute dated 6th June, 1854, solicited sanction for the introduction of the vernacular system of education in Punjab. He also encouraged the setting up of a college at Lahore. The scheme, though a modest measure, was yet a distinct advance upon the existing conditions.

The period following the Despatch of 1854 was one of great activity and development in the field of education in Punjab. In accordance with the recommendations of the Despatch, a Department of Public Instruction in Punjab was instituted in January 1856. It was entrusted with the duty of inspection and supervision of the institutions directly under the authority of the government and of those private ones which applied for grants-in-aid and recognition; of controlling educational funds and taking such measures as might improve the state of education in quality and quantity. At that time, there were 34 schools maintained from public funds, and 12 mission schools, most of which were in receipt of grants-in-aid.46

Mr. Arnold, who was an assistant commissioner in Punjab, was appointed Director of Public Instruction. Since competent Punjabis to discharge the duty of inspection was not available, foreigners were appointed for the same. The department continued to be under the control of the Financial Commissioner. Before the organization of the

department, the various schools maintained out of the Imperial revenues or local cesses had been under the control of civil officers. In the beginning a local cess of 1% of educational purpose had also been introduced throughout the province.\textsuperscript{47} The control of all government institutions was now transferred to the education department.

The evils resulting from this dissociation of the educational department from the civil authorities were not far to seek. By allowing the district officers to be unconcerned with schools, the government lost much of the moral influence which it might have legitimately exerted in favour of education. Consequently, in the districts of Sialkot, Amritsar, and Gujranwala, for instance, the principal schools were numerically less attended than before.\textsuperscript{48}

Moreover, the drawbacks arising from the appointment of foreign deputy and sub-deputy inspectors were also not too late to appear. The majority of them were not capable officers, as only third rate men found it worth-while to take service far away from their homes. They, obviously, had little influence with the people. So although the inspection staff had been strengthened, yet the supervision was found to be very inefficient.

In 1860, however, a radical change was made in the system of administration. The Indian supervising agency was abolished and the executive management of vernacular schools was placed in the hands of the districts officers. Next year a qualified official was appointed under each district officer for supervising the educational needs of these

\textsuperscript{47} Education cess was levied for the purpose of establishing schools in contributing localities as far as possible. Great expectations were raised. These were not fulfilled. To the astonishment and scarcely disguised indignation of the rural population, in a village, a school was demanded in return for the cess, and on its refusal an outbreak took place which had to be suppressed by the dispatch of troops. G.W. Leitner, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. ii-iii.

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Punjab Records}, December 1858, Letter No. 2654, dated 15 December 1858, from the Chief Commissioner, Punjab to the Financial Commissioner.
schools. Finally, the Director of Public Instruction was placed in direct communication with the government.\footnote{H.R. Mehta, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 44.}

In 1863-64 a redistribution of the districts was made among the four inspectors who in 1884 held respectively the charges of Ambala, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Frontier (known as Multan) Circles. An Indian Deputy Inspector for each circle was also appointed in 1863-64. Besides the above mentioned higher officers, an Indian inspecting officer, called \textit{Chief Schools Muharrir}, was kept in each district if it could afford. These Chief Schools Moharrirs were highly useful public servants but they were inferior both in attainments and in social position, and did not maintain the desirable standard, which persons discharging so important duties should maintain. Consequently, from 1870-71 onwards, they were gradually replaced by District Inspectors on higher salaries, i.e. Rs. 100/- per men sum or upward. Up to 1876-77, there were 14 District Inspectors, one District Inspectors and sixteen \textit{Chief School Moharrirs}.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 45.}

To enlist popular support for the work and programme of elementary schools local committees of public instruction began to be formed in various districts from 1864-65 onwards. Village committees were also organized in some localities. However, with a few exceptions where some activity was visible on account of the solicitude of the civil authorities, these non-official committees did not yet display much interest in the cause of education entrusted to their care.

The sources of revenue from which all charges were met, fell under two heads; provincial or imperial revenues and local sources. The most important of which till 1871 was the education cess levied on \textit{Zamindars} equal to one percent of the land revenue due from them. But
the village schools did not absorb the entire yield of the cess and fixed quotas were paid for office establishments, maintenance of normal schools and for the salaries of extra sub-deputy inspectors or supervisors of village schools. All other charges, direction, inspection, expenditure on Zillah and tehsil schools, grants-in-aid etc. were provided from imperial revenues. These arrangements continued till 1871-72. The financial change known as the decentralization scheme was carried out by the supreme government in 1870-71. This was followed in Punjab by the Punjab Local Rates of Act of 1871. By this local governments were entrusted with the duty of budgeting and controlling expenditure in certain departments, hitherto treated as imperial.

The local government was empowered to charge, as from time to time might be deemed necessary, a rate on all land not exceeding six pies for every rupee of its annual value. The general effect of this act in the course of the next few years was to double the amount hitherto received from the educational cess. This increased largely the means at the disposal of the new district committees for the education of agriculture class.

To begin with, no fees were charged in government schools, though under the grants-in-aid rules, some fees were charged from higher and middle classes in private institutions. The government recommended the charging of fees from boys of commercial and non-agriculture classes attending village schools, because, these classes contributed nothing for education, although cess levied on zamindars only were equally open to them. In 1860-61, fees were levied in government schools of all grades except female schools and normal

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schools. The rate of fees charged was, however, very low, ranging from one to two *annas* per month in *tehsil* and village schools and from one to four *annas* or eight *annas* in *zillah* schools.

The Despatch of 1854 acknowledged that the education of the great mass of people was totally neglected and that they were "utterly incapable of obtaining any education worthy of name by their own unaided efforts". The Despatch also admitted that it was impossible for government to develop a comprehensive scheme of education for the whole country single-handed. Thus the necessity of building up a system of grants-in-aid was stressed.

The period, therefore, ushered in a favourable atmosphere for the institution under private managements. These were to be aided and encouraged by government by means of the system of grants-in-aid. The main conditions to be fulfilled by schools to be entitled to a government grant were few and simple. The schools were to be open to government inspection; grants were to be made only for secular education; and some fee, however small was to be charged from pupils attending these schools. Grants were to be made, not for the general expenses of the school, but for specific purposes e.g. salaries of the staff, buildings or equipment and lastly, the state aid was not ordinarily to exceed one half of the entire expenditure on an institution.\(^{53}\)

The case of the indigenous schools was, however, different. The teachers of these schools, while they readily accepted the aid offered by government, ignored the fulfillment of the conditions on which such aid was granted. No scheme of secular studies was introduced by them. There were no classes in the real sense but as before "mere assemblage of lads". The scheme of making the existing indigenous schools the nucleus of a new and improved system completely broke down and was

soon given up. Because, when the prospect of government aid was held out to these schools, the original promoters of these institutions attempted to withhold their own contributions and tried to throw the whole burden of support on the educational cess. The education department henceforth took no notice of these schools, they could not be improved and were to be replaced by the schools established by the department.\textsuperscript{54}

Things were different in respect of elementary education. Local support required for the establishment of such schools under the grant-in-aid system was not forthcoming as the masses could not, in the first place, afford to pay subscriptions in addition to school fees, and secondly, because they did not yet properly understand the new government system of education. The Despatch of 1859 runs thus; “that the grant-in-aid system hitherto in force, was unsuited to the supply of vernacular education to the masses of the population and that the means of elementary education should be provided by the direct instrumentality of the officers of government."\textsuperscript{55}

But on the whole, the system of grants-in-aid was a great success. While in 1859-60 the aid given by government amounted only to Rs. 19,699 which was distributed among twenty institutions, in 1883-84 there were 195 institutions in receipt of Rs. 2,08,792.

According to the Despatch of 1854, Government took upon themselves the responsibility of ameliorating the moral and intellectual condition of the people “a grave responsibility which no other Government, of whatever nationality, ever took upon themselves in the history of the province”.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Despatch of 1859, paragraph, 50.
\textsuperscript{56} Sanaullah Khan. \emph{op.cit.}, pp. 10-11.
The instruction imparted in the village schools was of the most elementary character, including the three R's i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic, which was well adapted to the requirements of the people. Vernacular schools were henceforth to be classified as town schools and village schools. The instruction in the two kinds of institutions corresponded respectively to the middle and primary standards. In 1868-69, the present-day classification of schools into High, Middle and Lower schools was also adopted.

There were of course many obstacles in the extension of primary education. The mass of artisans and agriculturists did not yet perceive any advantage of education. They desired that their children should be educated to maintain and if possible raise their status. But the prevalent education, they felt was weaning away the children from their rural surroundings. Thus the department considered the advisability of the establishment of agricultural and industrial schools to enable the pupils to take their place in village life with greater intelligence, understanding and appreciation.

Although, the Despatch of 1854 emphasized the importance of the primary education, but the proposals, whatsoever, did not cut much ice. The resources available were ridiculously meager as compared to the magnitude of the problem. So much so that, at times, expenditure on these schools exceeded the income from the education cess. Consequently, during the next few years’, schools had to be closed to keep the expenditure within the limits of the income. Moreover, by 1868, the number of the popular schools began to dwindle because of the inefficiency of the village school teachers and the want of proper supervision. Still further, the government of the day as well as some influential people had pinned their faith on what had come to be known as the ‘Filtration Theory’ of education, i.e. concentrate on higher
education and education of the upper classes and they will, in their turn, naturally and inevitably, provide for the education of the masses. Had political conditions been different and had intimate contact existed between the classes and the masses, there was some likelihood of filtration process being set in motion. But this attempt to build 'top heavy inverted pyramid' could not prove a success.

The zillah or Anglo-Vernacular Schools established by the district officers, were of two kinds viz., superior schools in which the medium of instruction was chiefly English and inferior schools in which the vernacular formed the medium. The education imparted was a training of faculties rather than a moral training or a regulation of habits.\(^5^7\)

According to the Deapatch of 1854, secondary education was to be carried on in the English medium. Higher education was left mainly to private initiative. The government was however to give generous grants-in-aid to institutions which allowed the official inspectors to inspect their schools. The government made it a principle to keep these educational institutions linked up with admission to different governmental services.

The incorporation of the Calcutta University in 1857 also led in the Punjab to the gradual differentiation of schools imparting collegiate education, or education up to the level of Entrance Examination of the said university, from those which, though situated at headquarters, did not reach that standard. The number of aided schools which sent up candidates for the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University was nine during the year 1871-72.\(^5^8\) By 1883-84, 2,030 candidates had matriculated from the various institutions in the Punjab. During this

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\(^5^7\) General Report upon the Administration of the Punjab Proper, for the year 1849-50, and 1850-51, Calcutta, 1853, para. 381, p. 145.  
\(^5^8\) H.R. Mehta, op.cit., p. 61.
period the department established a high school at almost every district headquarters, about two Anglo-Vernacular middle schools in every district and 128 vernacular middle schools for mass education. To sum up while an educational standard had been attained and a sufficient number of schools to show the way had been established, the craving for knowledge had yet to be created in the Punjab so that the existing schools could be better attended. Secondary education, therefore, at its best was conceived merely as a step towards entrance to institutions of higher learning preparing for the university examinations and were not self-sufficient units preparing a student to enter life.\(^{59}\)

The Despatch of 1854 had sanctioned the establishment of colleges for general and special education in the various provinces. In the Punjab, however, it was considered advisable to postpone the establishment of a college at Lahore until students to avail of it were forthcoming. Students from Punjab schools began to appear at the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University from 1861-62. A Government college at Lahore was established in 1864. The college during this period was not well attended because the students could not afford to pay the cost of books. To defray the charges for their maintenance, stipends varying from Rs. 10 to Rs. 17 per men sum were given by the government at Lahore College.

The establishment of a university in the Punjab was not a part of the official educational programme, at it was felt that there was yet no demand for it. The Despatch of 1854 had also recommended the immediate establishment of universities only at the three presidency towns. Dr. Leitner, the first principal of the Lahore Government College, was interested in the promotion of oriental learning. A study of the educational system in vogue in the province gave him the impression

\(^{59}\) Shamsuddin, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 166.
that the system of tuition as pursued in the Government College and the Calcutta University was not helpful to the Progress of oriental learning and as such was unsuited to the needs of the province. A society known as Anjuman-i-Punjab, was founded under his auspices in 1865 and a proposal of a university was formulated the same year. The aim of the proposal was to give a new character to the general education of the people and to set up a university with special and separate institutions throughout the country for attaining this purpose, quite independent of the government system.

The supreme government signified its general approval to the principles of the movement, but was of the opinion that the establishment of a university for the Punjab was premature. It, therefore, only sanctioned the establishment of an aided institution to be styled as the ‘Punjab University College’ which might be expanded into a university hereafter.

All efforts concentrated merely upon male education could but lead to poor results in the case of intellectual, moral and social uplift of its people as long as the females remained steeped in ignorance. Long before the Government took to the cause of women’s education in its hands, missionaries were already at work. “Educated women have played an ever-increasing part in the public life of the county. The first stage of their awakening was undoubtedly due to the efforts of the Christian missions.  

The Education Despatch of 1854 had commended the subject of female education also. The matter received due attention at the hands of the local government. But in this sphere the efforts of the Punjab Education Department met with the greatest discouragement and the

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problem, down to the close of the period, appeared, if not absolutely insoluble, elusive and highly perplexing. In the beginning the government was not considerably alive to the improvement and expansion of female education. The first Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Arnold, writes, “When the department was first organized it was proposed to let the question of female schools stand over till the ordinary establishments were all set on foot”.  

Moreover, apathy of the people towards girls education owing to social and religious conservatism, the custom of early marriage and purdah system also impeded the growth of literacy among the women.

But the time, money and energy spent in this field, however, did not go in vain. The government was joined hands by private bodies or individuals. The reform movements and Punjabi gentlemen rendered meritorious service to the province by motivating people to educate their daughters. Consequently, due to the consistent efforts of official and non-official agencies, popular prejudices were gradually softened, the interest and cooperation of people was secured and measures for putting female education upon a more satisfactory basis were introduced towards the close of this period. The first girls’ school was opened at Rawalpindi under the auspices of Mr. Brown, Inspector of Schools, Rawalpindi Division, in December, 1856. In 1862, an enthusiastic movement was initiated in favour of female education, and a grand durbar was held at Lahore under the presidency of Sir Robert Montgomery, the Lt. Governor, for the purpose of enlisting the cooperation of the chiefs and other important people of the Punjab. Under this impulse, hundreds of schools were opened. By the year 1875, the

61 Sanaullah Khan, op.cit., p. 120.
62 Ibid., p. 121.
number of government and private schools had come to rest on more or less stable basis.

In spite of these efforts, the instructions imparted in these schools were not satisfactory. Some schools had to be gradually closed on account of the dearth of teachers. The training of female teachers during this period was left entirely to private enterprise. For the training of teachers for primary schools, normal schools were opened at Lahore and Rawalpindi. Still a long road was there to traverse in this field of education.

Thus the Despatch of 1854 touched almost all educational issues. But its achievements have been over-estimated. It was felt that the laudable ideals of the Despatch were never honoured in complete observance. Some remained ineffective, others were partially carried out. The dream of the Despatch, the diffusion of mass education, remained almost an unfulfilled dream only. The desire to withdraw in favour of the private enterprise was not fulfilled immediately while promotion of vernacular was yet a far cry. Similarly, its commendable object to give education which should be suitable to every station of life, was not fully realized. “It is to these and other omissions of the Despatch that the origin of many of the defects of the present educational system can be traced”.64 The Despatch contained nothing original. It was in fact, a cautious comprehensive collection of many policies pursued in early years. It must however be recognized that it did systematize, consolidate and develop the plans and policies formerly advocated and practiced.

Considering all aspects, one is led to say that the success allowance must be given to the difficulties. There might have bee some reluctance on the part of the government to carry out the principles of the Despatch in letter and spirit. But it is certain that the government had

64 Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, op.cit., p. 215.
to face great limitations and obstacles. The task was stupendous, the obstacles formidable and the means conspicuously limited. Under these conditions, it had been “a most arduous task to cause a stream of useful knowledge to percolate through the innumerable strata of population rooted in institutions immemorial in their antiquity and unique in the complex character of their framework”. With all these almost insurmountable limitations, what then the Despatch had achieved was not only that a many sided approach had been made to tackle the problem; that a step towards mass education had been taken; that a systematic scheme had been introduced; that a ladder from the elementary school to the university had been created and an initiative taken which bore a rich fruit in the subsequent years. More than this, it had devised such a fundamental plan that all the subsequent changes brought about in the policy may be regarded as a development of that policy rather than a departure from it. “The Despatch of 1854”, says J.R. James “is the climax in the history of Indian education. What goes before leads up to it; what follows, flows from it”.65 The Despatch still lies at the root of our modern system of education.

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65 J.R. James, Education and Statesmanship in India, Calcutta, N.D., p. 42.