CHAPTER-VI

SOCIO-POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

Change is the parameter of the development of a society. The social system changes in response to changing conditions within and without, internal as well as external. Contrary to the stereotyped beliefs, old traditions are not and should not be completely displaced by modernization. Lloyd I. Rudolph calls this phenomenon as 'modernity of tradition' and society but it has done so through assimilation and not replacement. Studies in Indian social process also provide evidence that "traditional institutions like joint family, kin-based entrepreneurial functions continue to co-exist with and support of modern values and forms of social actions".\(^1\) Without change, the society will become static and it will mean rather degeneration of ancient civilization. The advancement in education means of transport and communication had not only brought about the cultural diffusion of modernization but had also strengthened the old ties. The leadership that emerged was more conscious of national identity and pride in the traditional culture of India.

Cultural modernization will, under the process, assume a syncretism form and persist along with traditional values. Modernity will never completely supplant the tradition in India.\(^2\) Education should at best challenge rather than just confirm the status quo.\(^3\)

Any change thrust upon the people leads to open rebellion. It is again education which first prepares the mind to accept that change. Kuppuswamy writes, "Maximum reluctance to change and maximum

\(^1\) Yoginder Singh, *Modernisation of Indian Tradition*, Jaipur, 1988, p. 121.
\(^2\) Ibid.
readiness to change, both are suicidal”. Established communities in the North-East which have been ravaged by industrial change have sought through education both to understand and to adjust to that change.4

One of the determinants of change was the introduction of education, rather English education. The development of education by the British was motivated by the political, administrative and economic needs, but it led to social awakening in the province. Thus the education liberalized, rationalized and modernized the social fabric.5 Spread of education brought about modernization and westernization in the thoughts of the people and mode of living as well. Westernization, chiefly implied behavioral changes, change in dress, diet, style of eating, manners etc. while modernization signified value based change— updating of knowledge in literature and science and the cultivation of humanitarianism, equalitarianism and secularism etc.6 The demographic changes witnessed, directly correspond to the effects of education. During the period 1891-1901, the population in the Punjab increased by 9.1 percent, but during the next decade, it declined by 2.2%. The principal cause of this decrease was the appearance of recurring epidemics of plague which created havoc in the province. The total number of deaths caused was over two million in the British territory alone.7 The rate of increase of the population in 1911-21 was as much as 5.5 percent8 and 13.5 percent in 1921-31 and 20.4% in 1931-41. The decades 1921-31 and 1931-41 were more or less free from any epidemic disease, and were, therefore, more favorable for the growth in numbers.9

4 Ibid.
6 B. Kuppuswamy, Social Change in India, New Delhi, 1999, p. 58-60.
7 Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIV, pp. 41-42.
8 Census of India, 1921, pp. 60-62.
The control of the dreaded disease was evidently due to advancement in health services brought about by medical science. "One of the significant features of demographic history is that population and technology have been advancing hand in hand".10

The growth of urban population is a mark of the industrial development. The statistics show that during the period, there was only a marginal shift to the towns, which shows economic backwardness of the province. The small shift seems to be due to mobility of students coming to the towns for higher education, and men shifted to urban centers to get a share in the jobs. "In provinces like Bombay and Bengal, the development of organized industries resulted in a phenomenon ally rapid growth of the town population, in marked contrast to the almost stationary character of the urban population in Punjab."11

The following table shows the growth of rural and urban population during 1891 to 1941.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Urban population</th>
<th>Rural population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>89.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>90.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>87.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>85.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus population from 1921-41 was altering in the favour of towns, though very slowly, reflecting the development of trade and

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commerce. But at the same time, preponderant position of agriculture in the economic life of the people is also reflected. An important feature of the shift was that though the total number of literate persons in the cities and towns who were mainly males (they had shifted to towns in search of employment without their families) was increasing but their percentage in the total population was not increasing at the same rate. This was because substantial majority of those who migrated to cities and large towns in search of employment were illiterate.¹³

Amongst the three communities, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, the Hindus were the most literate followed by the Sikhs and Muslims being far behind the two communities. The government made special efforts to promote education amongst the Muslims. "Their poverty and not apathy was cited as the main cause of their backwardness. The following table shows the comparative literacy amongst the three communities."¹⁴

**TABLE NO. 16**

**LITERACY BY RELIGION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>No. of literates per thousand (1911)</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The higher number of literates in the towns show the better facilities of education there than in the rural areas. Invariably Lahore was the nucleus of education, which is depicted from following table.¹⁵

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As discussed in the previous chapters, the government's policy was to give education to some Indians so that the lower strata of the administration could be staffed. On the higher posts like principals of the college and schools, only Englishmen and Europeans were appointed. But as a result of the social changes, rather a happy change, Justice P.C. Chatterjee was appointed the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab University in 1907.16

As a result of modernization, advancement in the field of agriculture was witnessed. Agriculture being the mainstay of the great majority of the people, the establishment of Agricultural College and Research Institute at Lyallpur, made the cultivators well conversant with the modern and scientific technologies in cultivation. They had a better access to the new variety of seeds and better equipment. Agricultural progress also brought about social awakening in the rural masses. This led to their political consciousness which was fairly exhibited during the agrarian uprising of 1907. The development of agriculture however

16 *The Punjabee*, 25, December, 1907.
remained confined to the prosperous cultivators only. To ameliorate the economic condition of the poor peasants, Cooperative Societies and Land Mortgage Banks were established. The establishment of canal colonies brought further awakening amongst the rural people.

Besides agriculture, money-lending had developed to be an important profession amongst educated Hindu castes viz. Khatri, Arora and Bania, which had to increase in their influence. With the passing of Land Alienation Act of 1900, many of the money lenders were forced to invest their savings in urban enterprise. From 1901, for a decade, the urban castes gained ascendancy as pioneers of industry banking in the Punjab. Harkrishan Lal Gauba who was later on called, though exaggeratedly, “Napoleon of Finance”, inaugurated a new era in industry. Industrial activity began to increase with modernization of the province due to western education. In this field also, men of diverse castes began to join and gave rise to a new social class called “Business Managerial class”. The cotton industry began to attract capital investment. Hosiery industry at Ludhiana gave the town a dominant position in the industrial map of the province. Amritsar became the centre of silk trade and it generated employment to over 7000 men, women and children. The new Egerton woolen industry was established at Dhariwal. Several oil mills were established at various towns and cities like Lahore, Jullundur and Lyallpur. The educated class of Hindu society, Khatris and Aroras began to dominate the industrial scene of the province. The social consciousness thus achieved through education made them protect their rights in trade. In large towns, these

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17 Nina Puri, Political Elite and Society in the Punjab, New Delhi, 1985, p. 76.
19 Ibid.
traders and manufacturers formed committees to settle their problems and regulate their business.

The westernization, which came as a result of education, affected the architecture of the houses both in the countryside and in the towns. The insanitary surroundings, faulty drainage system, dark, damp and badly ventilated rooms got changed into airy, well-lit and clean houses. The small hole in the roofs was replaced by a chimney on the wall. To keep the house cool, high ceilings were designed. Each storey had windows and fanlights with colored patterned glass. People had developed taste for the matching colors. “The windows were painted a light blue, and the façade of the house was plastered in mat pink”.20

Change in the dwellings was followed by a change in the interior of the houses as well. Old durie, spread on the floor was replaced by chairs; sofas tables in line with the European fashion. Corresponding changes took place in the crockery, utensils, linen and other household items. The markets were flooded with British goods, and the people had started preferring imported articles than local ones. “Goods were usually British or German and many of the brands had become household names, Japan had not quite entered the market.”21 “People preferred the imported combs to the hand made wooden ones, the electro-plated Sheffield and Solinger knives and scissors to the solid steel ones made by local smiths, Pears and Vinolia soap to the home-boiled desi soap, and the shining coloured buttons to the simple cloths ones”.22 This shows a marked change in the living styles of the people though at the cost of Indian manufacturer. In the villages too, remarkable

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., pp. 103-104.
transformation was discernible in the living style. Metal utensils, sewing machines, gramophones and a clock became the pride of many houses.23

The diet and the eating habits of the people also underwent a change. Besides, gram rice and wheat, which still constituted the staple food and delicacies, were also served. The Persian over backed bread, lever, kidney and kabas were also liked by non-vegetarians.24 Coloured aerated drinks with synthetic flavours and use of ice got favour in summers. Tea was also relished especially in the towns but after the First World War the habit was introduced into the villages also by the soldiers returning from the war.25 The use of liquor increased in the towns and villages which led to increase of crime and immorality. Hukka gave way to Bidi – which was poor man’s luxury, while cigar and cigarette became a way of life for the official classes.

Dhoti and Tahmats of men in villages remained the same but people who had any connection with the official life, this was replaced by Pyjamas which were fairly loose up to the knees and fitted rather tightly up to ankles. Muslims as well as Hindus used baggy trousers called the salwar and kurta. In winters, waist coat or the coat wadded with cotton was used. The taste for the cloth manufactured in European and in English style became pronounced during the 19th and 20th centuries,26 and had become popular with the educated classes only. The dress of the national leaders was also imitated by some during the Indian National Movement, ‘Gandhi Cap’ became a craze for many.

Woman’s choli was getting replaced by salwar and well cut kurta. “The Hindu ghaghra, the voluminous ankle length skirt, had practically gone out and only a few old women wore it. The woman always wore

24 Prakash Tandon, op.cit., p. 103.
25 B.S. Saini, op.cit., p. 119.
Salwar and Kamezes."²⁷ Women of Hindu well to do tend to adopt sari in place of Salwar. Women were fond of ornaments. It was estimated that people spent more than Rs. 3 crores on jewellery annually.²⁸ But under the new influence, the use of jewellery on festive occasions by children and men were on the decline. Even the women used jewellery on festival occasions only. In the towns, the educated classes preferred to wear English shoes and boots. Ladies began to wear high heels.

There was no social stratification prevalent in the localities where middle class educated families lived. A Muslim lawyer, a Hindu confectioner, a Muslim clerk in the municipality and a brahman family could be seen living in the one locality.²⁹ In the canal colonies, men of diverse social position with varying qualifications were seen living together. Here could be found representatives of aristocracy, the middle classes and members of agricultural tribes from large land owners to petty farmers as well as farm labourers.”³⁰ This indeed was the singular contribution of the awakening brought about by the western education.

Due to the uninterrupted peace, people ventured to come out of city wall areas and began to live outside. In 1925, the idea of Model Town was conceived and a big tract of jungle wasteland was acquired near Lahore which was developed into a well planned locality on geometrical lines. It had its own market a school, library, a barat ghar and a dispensary. There was a Mosque, a Temple and a Gurdwara which were “the most attractive example of modern religious architecture”.³¹

²⁷ Prakash Tandon, op.cit., p. 90.
²⁹ Prakash Tandon, op.cit., p. 90.
³⁰ Shymla Bhati, op.cit., p. 87.
³¹ Prakash Tandon, op.cit., p. 212.
The culture of club life also began from this locality. Soon other towns also emulated this life style. This was a miniature of civil-lines area where the British officials resided.

The way of living in these localities had influenced the life style of the people immensely. Traditional fairs and festivals were expanded or modified or at many places replaced by new ones. The theatrical activity was confined to the annual show of a college dramatic society only. Occasionally, a touring dramatic company staged religious or historical plays in big towns. The roles of the women actresses were played by trained boys only. There was not a single professional theatre in the Punjab. The practice of company baghs provided healthy environment to the middle class families. By 1942, cinema had become popular source of entertainment. The upper and middle classes also took to football, tennis and cricket. “For recreation of Sahibs particularly in divisional and district headquarters, there were separate parks and clubs and gymkhanas; they had their games courts, and at some places, swimming pools, polo grounds and race courses. The well to do and professional people, among Indians too formed their own clubs. The division between the two societies in their social life was consciously maintained.

“The new education became an important agent for the rise and emergence of a professional middle class which became the driving force of the national movement, and the backbone of the national leaders. The social change led to the mental stress of the educated elite. They needed a platform where they could release their social, religious and economic problems. The Punjabi Hindu elite found an anchor in the

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35 *Punjab District Gazetter Series*, 1933.
Arya Samaj, while the Chief Khalsa Diwan provided answers to the Sikh elite and the problems of Islamic community were looked after by Ahmadiya movement. Although these were basically religious movements yet, they also worked on social political and economic horizons. The educational programme carried out by these organizations, so vigorously motivated them to undertake social welfare works like the upliftment of women, establishment of orphanages, houses for the poor, relief work during famines and epidemics. The first attack of the Punjabi elite through these organizations was on the all powerful corner stone of civilization—the caste system.\(^{36}\)

The caste system was the steel frame of Hinduism. It had fairly entrenched in the society and had divided the community into a multitude of almost hermetically sealed groups. “It was more ancient than Vedas which recorded it at that time”.\(^{37}\) There has been a radical change in the numerous aspects of social structure, but what survived in India today is nothing but the bare and rigid structure of casteism, devoid of the spirit which once ruled it.\(^{38}\) While Hinduism made for the cultural unity of all Hindus in the past, the caste system socially kept them apart by dividing them into an even increasing number of groups and sub-groups. It was as undemocratic and authoritarian. “The castes constituting the series were hierarchically graded, each caste being considered inferior to those above it and superior to those below it.”\(^{39}\) Hence Hindu society had shown throughout its history, a low capacity for resistance to external attacks, although it enjoyed longevity of a primitive organism.\(^{40}\)

\(^{38}\) B.S. Saini, *op.cit.*, p. 47.
In all ages, the reformers have made a scathing attack against this practice. Kabir, Guru Nanak Dev and others had valiantly tried to pull at down. Raja Rammohan Roy and Dayanand Sarswati had started a tirade against this orthodox practice. Lajpat Rai and Gandhi were no way less vociferous in their condemnation of the ritual.

A uniform system of education started by the British Government definitely tended to break its vitality. The education imparted by the government was secular and basically liberal in contrast to the education in pre-British India which endorsed caste distinctions. Though the British rule, the rule of the alien people over the Indian nation was an undemocratic phenomenon, yet it propagated principles such as equality of men before law, equal rights to all citizens of the state, equal freedom to follow any vocation which weakened the caste distinctions. The boarding houses attached to schools and colleges also minimized its severity. The influence of western thought based on European liberalism and introduction of modern machinery like trains, buses and railways gave frequent occasions to the people of all castes to rub their shoulders with each other. The culture of hostels, restaurants, theatres accelerated the process of break down of caste restrictions.

With the increasing sense of professionalism, people left their traditional occupations. Members of the higher castes under the stress of economic circumstances were choosing careers which “sixty years ago would have been seen with terror”. Many brahmins were thus setting up as cart drivers, tailors, traders, shopkeepers and even cooks. Similarly, the Khataris were taking to cutting the grass and selling fuel and other occupations. Working together in factories, mines and government offices made it difficult to maintain its stringent rules.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{41}} B.S. Saini, } \textit{op.cit.}, \text{ p. 54.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{42}} \textit{Ibid.}\]
growth of nationalist movement played a great part in weakening the caste consciousness. The leaders gave a call to the masses without any distinction of class, caste, and creed to join these movements. When persecuted by the government and put in jail, they became more humane and tolerant towards each other. The racial hatred, they developed for the British rule was so intense that it left little room for the hatred to be continued for their own men. Thus, the new political, social and cultural influence shook the caste foundations.

Colonization led the way towards upward mobilization. For instance, most of 97,000 chuhras who migrated to Chenab Colony had abandoned their hereditary occupation and had settled down as prosperous agriculturists and possessed a large number of cattle. Thus the lower-caste migrants to canal colonies left their low-caste occupation and took to agriculture. The modern villages planned and developed by canal colonies side, had no separate dharamshalas temple for different people. Though these low caste men lived on the outer skirts of the villages in separate areas, yet they intermingled with people of other castes at schools and places of worship. Thus, in these colonies due to the effect of the enlightenment, a new type of society began to emerge. Old ties were broken and new ones were formed. “The bonds of education and work supplanted the old caste bonds, and a new society emerged with four castes whose membership was cutting across the traditional pattern. They were the professionals drawn from all caste.” Thus caste links were retained, but class bonds were also formed. It would, however, be wrong to conclude that caste system had ceased to exist. “Indeed India’s nationalists and communal religious ideologies

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43 The Tribune, 20 April, 1904.
44 Shymala Bhatia, op.cit., p. 89.
45 Prakash Tandon, op.cit., p. 148.
have interacted with the ideas and experiences of caste, sometimes reinforcing their claims and sometimes challenging them, but never fully overriding or replacing them.\textsuperscript{46} The citadels of illiterate masses where literacy could not penetrate still held the caste prejudices. The social awakening brought about by education has only succeeded in minimizing its rigidity. Except some laxity in the food taboos among the higher castes, there was practically ‘no change with reference to the basis of castes distinctions’.\textsuperscript{47}

The other crying evil of the society was deplorable condition of the women. The \textit{vedic} had been regarded as a ‘golden age’ for women. They were valued and they occupied position of high status. “During this ‘golden age’ women were educated, married only after they had reached maturity, moved about freely and participated in the social and political life of that time”.\textsuperscript{48} Kappuswamy also writes in the same vein, “In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the recent changes in the status of women in India is not a sign of progress but it is really a recapturing of the position that they held in the early \textit{Vedic} period”.\textsuperscript{49}

Literary and historical researchers have now established beyond doubt that women held a position of equality with men during the \textit{Vedic} period. The girls as well as boys were required to undergo \textit{Upanyanan} ceremonies in order to be initiated to the \textit{Vedic} education. Drastic changes took place in the Indian society from about 300 B.C. to Christian era. The discontinuance of \textit{Upanyanan}, neglect of education and the lowering of marriage age produced disastrous effects upon the

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Census of India}, 1931, XVII, p. 324.
\textsuperscript{48} Geraldine Forbes, \textit{Women in Modern India}, New Delhi, 1996, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{49} B. Kuppuswamy, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 258.
position and status of women. The period between 300 B.C. and A.D. 300 saw the invasion of Greeks, Sythians, Parthians and then the Kushans. The political upheavals brought upheavals in the position of women as well.

The position of women steadily deteriorated. She began to be considered inferior species. Socially she was kept in a state of utter subjection, denied any right, oppressed and suppressed. The Sati, the prohibition of remarriage, the spread of purdah and greater prevalence of polygamy made her position distressing. One of the worst features of the medieval society was its treatment to women. “They were denied the right of property, condemned to either life long widowhood or to cremation of pyre of the dead husband and exposed to suffer the cruel consequence of polygamy”.\textsuperscript{50}

With the advent of the British rule, and the crusade of the social reformers like Ram Mohan Rai, Dayanand Sarswati, Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar and many more a new orientation was found in the attitude of the society. They addressed a number of issues, most of them relating to marriage and importance of female education. “Their ideas on gender were rooted in personal experience. During their lives they attempted to change those with whom they lived and worked. They responded to them with passion.\textsuperscript{51}

In spite the efforts of these men, widow remarriage never received the approval of society, polygamy was not abolished and the battle for female education had only begun. Moreover, the government was overly cautious about social reforms and in the wake of rebellion of 1857, was reluctant to act. But the persistent efforts of their reformers, their persuasive arguments, social action, education and legislation did bring

\textsuperscript{50} Tara Chand, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 254.
\textsuperscript{51} Geraldine Forbes, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 20.
about a reorientation in the attitude of the society towards the fair sex. The liberals like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale, and other were convinced that national uplift and progress was impossible without education of women and their emancipation. Justice Mahadev Gobind Ranande\textsuperscript{52} started a National Social Conference in 1887. At the second annual meeting in 1889, over five hundred people took a solemn vow that they would support widow remarriage and female education and cease plasticizing child marriage and the exchange of dowry.\textsuperscript{53} Thus in the field of education, she had to traverse a long path of apathy, ridicule, criticism and acceptance.

Notwithstanding the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev and his nine successors, the Punjabi woman remained illiterate, unaware and tradition bound. Census reports confirm the fact that female infanticide was prevalent in some areas amongst the Sikhs and Hindu castes. Inquiries showed in 1868 that the Sikhs and Hindu \textit{jats}, who had not formerly been suspected, were also not free from this crime.\textsuperscript{54}

Inquiries made under the orders of the Government in 1888-89 about the causes of high rate of female over that of male infant mortality in Jullundur, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Peshawar divisions showed that female infanticide was practiced by certain classes in those districts.\textsuperscript{55} The Census of 1891 showed only 850 females to every 1000 males in Punjab.\textsuperscript{56} Census reports of 1901 had once again shown that males were in excess of females in Punjab of female in Punjab, the ration being 852

\textsuperscript{52} Renade (1842-1901) graduated from Elphinstan College in Bombay and became a teacher and a journalist.
\textsuperscript{54} G.S. Chabra, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Census of India}, 1891, p. 200.
females to 1000 males. In sheer numbers, female formed over 44 percent of the population in urban areas in 1881 which had decreased to 42 percent in 1941.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
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<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is distressing to note that male female ratio has not improved over the years. Even at the threshold of entering the next millennium there are only 885 women against 10000 male in Punjab. It is an all time low sex ratio. In fact in this world of awareness, traditional way of female infanticide has been replaced only by practice of female foeticide largely being carried on in towns. This is likely to have far reaching consequences in times of come.

The causes of the decrease, explained by the demographers had been the epidemics and lack of proper health care, especially in case of females. The slight improvement during the decade 1931-41 can be attributed to the growth of education and efforts of religious organizations and no less to the efforts of individuals in the fields. They waged a war against injustices done to the women. Bhai Takhat Singh and his wife Harnam Kaur made untiring efforts in the direction, who organized an anti-purdah conference, which got a wide response.

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57 Census of India. 1901, p. 266.
59 Ibid.
Similarly, Pushpa Gujral of Jullundur, a social reformer worked for the welfare of widows. During the course of 19th century the pattern of women’s life began to change. With the persuasion of the leaders of Chief Khalsa Diwan, widows tied their nuptial knots.\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Arya Samaj} did not lag behind and many widows of middle class families of Amritsar and Jullundur were remarried in 1910.\textsuperscript{61}

The establishment of women’s University at Poona in 1916, was a milestone achieved by the change of attitude about women amongst the educated section of the society. The educated women too began to be called ‘new women’\textsuperscript{62} who sought to modify gender relation in the direction of greater equality between men and women. With the increased urbanization and the growth of new professions with colonial domination and establishment of new educational institutions, erosion in the traditional outlook was witnessed.\textsuperscript{63}

With the efforts of the educated elite, the custom of child marriages also declined. A group of educated women formed an association against child marriages in 1914. \textit{Sati}, the most brutal of the custom was also tackled seriously. Shanti Devi and Amrit Kaur, the renowned social workers, formed an association ‘\textit{Vidhva Bachao}’ to enlighten the masses against \textit{Sati}.\textsuperscript{64} An open attack on the polygamy was made when 125 women of Lahore arranged a meeting under the leadership of one Rup Kaur of Lahore in 1911, with the result that six ladies took a vow not to allow their husbands to remarry, although they themselves were infertile.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[60] \textit{The Khalsa Advocate}, Amritsar, 9 December 1910, \textit{Selections from the Native Newspapers, Punjab}, 1910.
\item[61] \textit{Ibid.}, 10 December, 1910.
\item[62] Sarla Devi Chaudharuani, a Bengali woman from the famous Tagore family was an excellent example. Geraldine Forbes, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 28.
\item[63] \textit{Ibid}.
\item[64] \textit{The Sikh}, Amritsar, 13 June, 1916, \textit{Selections from the Native Newspapers, Punjab}, 1916.
\end{footnotes}
With a new consciousness, women also began to participate in the political activities of the province. The social awakening brought about by education led to the increase of humanitarian values in the society. The struggle against caste system and untouchability, ultimately created a wave for the uplift of the backward classes. Similarly social values, which could be identified with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, were a rational outlook of life, economic uplift, secularism, social justice and equality of the sexes. So, empowering was their appeal that they became the basis of the constitution of free India.

II POLITICAL CHANGE

Education brought about a transformation in India during the 20th century. The literary renaissance brought about a social awakening and a sense of nationality. English language became a crucial factor in socializing and communicating political ideas. "Indian Political awakening was one of the main benefits which followed from the study of English. The most important result was, however, a new intellectual awakening of the Indian mind". It served to unite the varying forces among the Indian population which the confusion in languages had made impossible. Henry Cotton remarked:

"English language is the channel through which the fire-worshippers of Bombay and the Baboos of Bengal, the Brahmans of Madras and the Mahrattas of Poona, the Rajpoots of Upper India, the martials of the Punjab and the Dravidian races of the other extreme end of the peninsula, are able to meet on one common platform and to give expression to their common interests and aspirations."

The growth of education, network of roads, steamships, the post offices and the telegraphs, though started with ulterior motives filled the

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gap which had kept the nation apart. Henry Cotton also observed, “They have learnt their strength, the power of combination, the force of members and has now been kindled in all the provinces of India, a national movement which is destined to develop and increase until it receives its fulfillment in the systematic regeneration of the whole country”. 67

The new education proved to be a catalytic agent for the emergence of the new elite which posed a challenge to the ‘traditional elite’. 68 They mostly resided in major towns and cities and gave necessary leadership to the society. Initially, though the new intelligentsia did not succeed in moulding the policy of the government, they had at least exercised an immense influence in developing the history of their country and the character of their countrymen.

The formation of Indian National Congress provided them with a place to meet, gave them an opportunity to express and a motivation to act. The impression recorded by an English gentleman, Mr. Swinny, who was a spectator to the eighteenth meeting of the Indian National Congress at Ahmedabad in 1902 makes an interesting reading. 69

The first manifestation of the feeling of unanimity and spontaneity of the nation as a whole was at the occasion of the departure

67 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
68 Nina Puri, Political Elite and Society in Punjab, New Delhi, 1985, p. 40.
69 The Congress I found extremely interesting. I attended every sitting, and found the proceedings moderate and business like throughout. Every community was represented. Learned pandits from the North sat beside graduates of the English Universities. Hindoos from Madras met those of Sind; native Christians, Jew doctors, Parsees, Mohammedan traders from south Africa, all were there. The resolution had a wide range. The economic situation, the threatened increase of military expenditure, the revenue from salt, and the Report of the Universities Commission for India, were the subjects dealt with. The Congress is the meeting place of the political leaders of all parts of India. By it they have become able to work in concert. Though it a common public opinion has become possible. Henry Cotton, op.cit., pp. 9-10.
of Lord Ripon. The people had learnt to react to different policies of the
government and the different attitude of its officials. People of all races
and creeds, joined together to display their gratitude to a kind and
understanding Viceroy, Lord Ripon at the occasion of his departure
from India. Equality marked were the feelings of opposition of the
educated elite towards the reactionary tendencies of bureaucratic rule of
Lord Curzon. Henry Cotton wrote:

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\text{Legislation designed to curtail the liberty of press and speech, crusade against the so called sedition; the substitution of a system of nomination of government services in place of competitive examinations; the practical declaration of race disqualification for public office, the hampering and fettering of unaided colleges and schools officilisation of all branches of education and above all the partition of Bengal were the measures which roused the animosity of the people.}^{70}
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Russo-Japanese War—a war between the East and the West, further
awakened the already rising elite. “Despair changed into a hope. Asia
awoke, and with Asia, India”.\(^71\) The solution of Irish question according
to the wishes of the people, the surrender of Samurai of Japan; the fall of
Manchu Dynasty in China, followed by a Chinese Republic; the struggle
of Persia to free herself from the domination of alien power were viewed
with sympathetic interest by the educated section.

At home, the partition of Bengal and that too in spite of vigorous
protests of the educated elite, smoldered discontent and unrest. It was
not an administrative necessity. Henry Cotton was can did enough to
admit, “It was part and parcel of Lord Curzon’s policy to enfeeble the
growing power and destroy the political tendencies of patriotic spirit.”\(^72\)

\(^{70}\) Ibid., pp. 6-7.

\(^{71}\) Annie Besant, \textit{India Bound or Free?}, New York, 1926, p. 160.

\(^{72}\) Henny Cotton, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 12.
Curzon further alienated the intelligentsia beyond hope of reconciliation. His utterances and actions gave immediate rise to a militant nationalism. Lajpat Rai remarked, "I am inclined to pray that from time to time God might be pleased to send viceroys like Lord Curzon to this country, in order to awaken the people of this country to a sense of their responsibility." It awakened the educated class to the necessity of industrial and technical education and above all evoked the realization that salvation must after all come from within. It ushered a national struggle which soon became irresistible. "Consequently, history will describe Curzon as a viceroy who made the biggest contribution to the weakening of British rule in India".

'The partition of Bengal' was the sorrow of India. The measure was carried against and in spite of the protests of Indians. After exhausting all constitutional methods of agitation, the educated resorted to a new method of Swadeshi movement. The object of which was to encourage national manufacturers and industries and to prevent the importation and consumption of foreign goods.

Punjab was not way apart from the change which was tightening its grip on the country. The rise the educated middle class, comprising of college teachers, university fellows, professional men such as engineers, bankers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, merchants, even shopkeepers, became the mouth piece of the public opinion. Spread of education was intimately related to the press. The newspapers played a dominant role in socio-political mobilization. 'The Tribune', 'The Panjabee', 'Khalsa Advocate', 'Hindustan', 'Zamindar' etc. contributed significantly towards the politico-awarement of the people. The Tribune represented

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the liberal thought in the Punjab. By the end of the century, Lahore alone had over fifty presses; forty newspapers were published from here.

The opinion of the province was moulded at Lahore, “Which had become the centre of new learning, of political power and of intellectual and cultural ferment.” The new elite had emerged as a dominant class of educated individuals who were having wider outlook, liberal attitude and political consciousness. Many of them were a combination of vocations. They became the voice and brain of the countrymen. The idea of an individual became the ideology of a group. By now they were less isolated among themselves and started relying on the community to which they belonged. The individuals like Dyal Singh Majithia – a notable social reformer, outstanding educationalist, a true benefactor, became a vehicle to bring the people in the orbit of ‘change’. Along with it, the socio-religious movements like, Arya Samaj, Dev Samaj, Chief Khalsa Dewan and the Anjumans contributed immensely to the process through their programme of education, which ultimately led to their awakening for the consolidation of the society and became the basis of political movements in the later years.

The Land Alienation Act passed on 8th October, 1901, gave a new direction to the political consciousness in the province. Though an agrarian legislation, it assumed a ‘communal colour’ and could not hide conceal the government’s policy of ‘Divide and Rule’. Tara Chand wrote:

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*Ibid*. Harkrishan Lal was a lawyer, teacher, journalist and a businessman. Lajpat Rai was a lawyer and a journalist. Tara Chand, *op.cit.*, p. 299.
Whatever else may or may not have contributed to the forces which brought about the partition of India, there is no denying the fact that the dichotomy of Hindu zamindar and money-lender on the one hand and the Muslim peasant and debtor on the other hand, was an important factor.\(^79\)

The alienation of land restricted and regulated but not prohibited altogether. In fact it was more of a device to check the moneylender, ‘an ever increasing political danger’ than to give relief to the poor peasantry.\(^80\) “It was an astute way to curb the growing power of the educated Hindu elite. The effect of the act was that these men were now forced to invest their savings in urban enterprise, something the British ruling class did not anticipate. It was an administrative act clothed in economic garb to deal with a political problem.\(^81\) The educated elite did not meekly accept the proposed legislation. They submitted petition and memorandum and organized protest meetings to express their hostility to the bill. The Muslims of the province soon realized the importance of the bill for their community and sent memorials in favour of it. The Hindu elite thus failed to influence the government. A solitary effect of the act was that the educated Hindus began to see the futility of lining with the government of concessions. Resentment against the British rule soon fomented in the form of ‘swadeshi’ and ‘boycott’ movements in the province.

The cult of swadeshi was not new to Punjab. The founder of Kukas, Ram Singh laid stress on the use of khaddar and boycott of foreign goods.\(^82\) Similarly the Arya Samaj viewed the use of indigenous

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\(^79\) Tara Chand, *op.cit.*, p. 299.


goods by the Indian as essentials for ensuring self dependence of the country. As early as 1881, use of *swadeshi* had been preached by Sain Das. The cloth manufactured at Ludhiana was the manifestation of the *swadeshi* cult. Lajpat Rai believed that the motives of the movement were economic and patriotic. It was felt that *swadeshi* movement would give an impetus to Indian industries and manufacturers, the boycott, on the other hand would protect the same from within. “The *swadeshi* ought to make us self respecting, self reliant, self supporting, self sacrificing and last but not the least, manly”.

The events in Punjab can closely be related to happenings in Bengal. In fact, the elite in Punjab began to emulate the life style of the English knowing Bengalis who had settled in other province. For want of local talent, the government recruited Bengalis to government services and many visited province to form a public opinion on national issues. “At the present moment the name of Surendra Nath Banerjee excited as much enthusiasm among the rising generation of Multan as in Decca”.

A society was established at Lahore with the chief object of promoting *swadeshi* manufacturers and industries. The establishment of the Punjab National Bank in 1895 and Bharat Insurance Company in 1896 was a part of this programme. In Lahore, the D.A.V. College became the nerve centre of the movement. In 1883, the members of the Indian National Association had pledged to use Indian made articles as far as possible.

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83 *The Panjabee*, 6 June, 1906.
86 S.N. Banerjee, the founder of Indian Association visited Lahore and Amritsar and formed a branch of the association at Lahore.
87 Henry Cotton, *op.cit.*, p. 28.
Prof. Gokal Chand of D.A.V. College was hopeful that Swadeshi movement will bring about a unity which was the greatest need of the time. "Swadeshi movement promises to do what religion, social reform and policies had failed to do i.e. unite the heterogeneous masses, Hindus and Muslims, into one complete body whose force would be irresistible and for whom nothing would be impossible".\footnote{The Panjabee, 6 November, 1905.} ‘The Panjabee’ further warned the government to concede the demands or it would lead to confrontation. It observed:

That Swadeshi has come to stay in the land and there is no power on the earth which can kill it, it cannot be ignored for a much longer time. The best policy is then, to make a common cause with the people, to guide them and thus to remove the sting which it is believed is attached to it. If, however, the government decides to adopt a policy of suppression and repression, then a struggle is bound to ensue.\footnote{Ibid., 9 June, 1906.}

There is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars about the magnitude of the movement. Shyamala Bhatia and S.C. Mittal are of the opinion that the movement had generated an appeal amongst the elite while Satya M. Rai and Nina Puri give impression that its impact was only marginal. However, with some variance at different places in the province, the movement did arouse the urban elite.

Some officials felt that if “the government acts with them, and through them, and not against them, the disturbing tendencies will speedily subside”.\footnote{Henry Cotton, op.cit., p. 19.} But the government, as it was led or misled by the sycophants, could not grasp the true meaning of the situation. It treated the movement as mere ‘school boy agitation’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 29.} The unsympathetic
response of the government to the desire to obtain self-government and the detailed management of their affairs led even the core moderates to change their tone. Dadabhai Naoroji's in 1906, formed a remarkable change from conventional type of address. He said:

_We do not ask for any favours, we want only justice. Instead of going into any further division of our rights as British citizens, the whole matter can be comprised in one word self Government or Swaraj._\(^{93}\)

The speech is not only important in text but more because it reflects a 'psychological change' that worked miracles in the succeeding years. The old spell had been broken at last and men now spoke out their minds freely.\(^{94}\) Holding almost similar views Henry Cotton expressed:

_Able and energetic Indians, enlightened and educated by ourselves, expanding with new ideas and fired by an ambition to which English education has given birth, make demands which are continually more and more reasonable and more irresistible._\(^{95}\)

Punjab was seething with discontent which even the government could not ignore to note. Sir Denzil Ibbetson, then Lieutenant Governor, in the early months of 1907, wrote, "The Punjab, however, has by no means escaped the revolutionary contagion. Everywhere people are sensible of change, of a 'new air' which was blowing through men's minds, and were waiting to see what would come of it".\(^{96}\)

The Colonization Bill evoked discontent from all quarters of the province. It gave a fillip to the political activity which in due course assumed wide dimensions and also engulfed large sections of the urban

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\(^{94}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{95}\) Henry Cotton, _op.cit._, p. vi.

\(^{96}\) *Sedition Committee Report*, 1918, Calcutta, 1918, p. 41.
and rural population. The bill sought to change the very basis of the land
relationship in the Punjab. By the dint of their hard labour, the farmers
of the central Punjab converted the extensive crown waste land, lying in
the western region, into the most fertile area of the province. The bill
intended to change the status of the grantee to that of an ordinary tenant,
and proposed to considerably increase the land revenue and irrigation
rates in Bari Doab canal. The bill generated political discontent.
Aurobindo Ghosh said,

Undoubtedly, the new spirit, which has gone out like a
mighty fire from Bengal lighting up the whole of India, has found
its most favourable ground in the Punjab.\textsuperscript{97}

The political elite became critical of the bill and objected to the
language used by the pro-British \textit{The Civil and Military Gazette}, about
the people, as derogatory. An atmosphere of uneasiness was created.
Ajit Singh and Lajpat Rai addressed several meetings and mobilized the
opinion of the masses against the legislation. Ajit Singh remarked, “The
Punjab also has shaken off sleep after Bengal”. The Bill coincided with
the decision of the government to the enhancement of land revenue
assessment in Rawalpindi district,\textsuperscript{98} which was very strongly resented.
Violent disturbances sparked off in the whole province. The soul stirring
poem, ‘\textit{Pagri Sambhal O Jatta}’ rented the air in a meeting held at
Rawalpindi “For the first time, the peasantry had raised their voice. For
the first time, Punjabi urban elite and also rural elite, Hindus and
Muslims, tenants and landlords, protested jointly and the target of attack
was government”.\textsuperscript{99} The urban politics had reached the masses. The act
found loud expression of protest in mass meetings of the illiterate \textit{Jats},

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Hindustan} (Lahore), May 3, 1907.

\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies}, 1907-08,
p. iv.

\textsuperscript{99} \textit{The Punjabi}, 9 March, 1907.
Avians and others in Chenab Colony. Sir Denzil Ibbetson reviewed the situation and felt that in the east and west of the province, the new ideas were confined to the educated classes and among them, in the main, to the pleaders, clerks and students. He observed:

As the centre of the province is approached, the feeling in the towns grows stronger, and there are greater signs of activity and unrest. In the cities of Amritsar and Ferozepur there has been attempt on the part of the Lahore agitators to arouse feelings of disloyalty which has apparently met with considerable success in Ferozepur, though it has not been so successful in Amritsar. In the towns of Rawalpindi, Sialkot and Lyallpur, an active anti-English propaganda is being openly and sedulously preached. In Lahore, the capital of the province, the propaganda is virulent and has resulted in a more or less general state of unrest.

The Lieutenant-Governor accused the leadership of hatching conspiracy to throw the British out of country and that a racial hatred was stirred against the government. He considered the whole situation “exceedingly dangerous and urgently demanded remedy”. The remedy adopted was the arrest and deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh under the provisions of Regulation III and of 1818. The suggestion, that the root of the trouble was agrarian, was not accepted by the secretary of State Mr. Morley, speaking in the House of Commons on 6th June 1907, said, “There are twenty eight meetings known to have been held by the leading agitators in the Punjab between 1st March and 1st May, of these five only related, even ostensibly, to agricultural

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100 Nina Puri, *op.cit.*, p. 95.
102 Ibid., p. 142.
103 Ibid.
grievances: the remaining twenty three were all purely political.”

Thus the government failed to see the underlined cause of unrest. The observation of Morley also be speaks the extent of political awareness that has spread in Punjab simultaneously with the growth of education.

There was a great stir in the whole country at the arrest and deportation of Lajpat Rai and a number of protest meetings were held against the arbitrary and high handed action of the government. “A single panic-stricken act of the bureaucracy did more to popularize Lajpat Rai and further his mission than hundreds of speeches-repression having more potent effect than agitation”.

The Statesman in Calcutta recorded, “Arrests in Punjab indicate that the public feeling is inflamed.” The deportation of Lajpat Rai caused consternation even in London. The liberal members of the House of Commons condemned the repressive policy of Ibbetson and remarked, “Even the most rudimentary principles of justice” observed by the Indian Administration.

V.V. Chirol wrote “such strong repressive measures as the deportation of two prominent agitators under an ancient ordinance of 1818 were never before applied in such connection.”

Famines in the unirrigated tracts and extreme poverty aggravated by constant crop failures and an epidemic plague, causing the death of 65,000 people in a week in the Punjab, added to the misery and bitterness of the people. The agrarian population, a recruiting class-a class which had done the most in popularizing the British rule in India, a class which probably contributed largest amount of revenue, was alienated from the government. In a rare show of solidarity, Hindus,

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104 Ibid.
105 The Civil and Military Gazette, 11 May, 1907.
106 Khalsa Advocate, 1 June, 1907.
Sikhs and the Muslims of urban and rural areas actively participated in the anti-Bill agitation. The government was not slow to realize that the mass awakening was due to the spread of education in the province. “The growing clamour of the people for the participation in the administration of the country led a nervous bureaucracy to regard education in the same light as it was in 1857”.

The government adopted the policy of repression and pacification. It passed the Seditious Meeting Act, and the Press Act to maintain its awe. Hindus, particularly the *Arya Samajists* among them, became the target of government’s displeasure. On the other hand, to set the controversy at rest, the Government of India vetoed the Colonization Bill. Moreover, to assuage the feelings of Punjabi cultivator, land tax and the water charges were reduced to half. Under the public pressure and on getting evidence about the non-involvement of Lajpat Rai in seditious activities, the authorities released both the leaders of the Punjab on 11 November, 1907. All these events were taken by the determined educated elite as their first victory against a powerful British bureaucracy. Giving a note of warning to the people about the policies of the government, Lajpat Rai remarked that the policy of concessions was even more dangerous than the policy of repression.

The revolutionary movements were suppressed with severity, found expression in the province during 1911-15. The murder of Curzon Willie at London had sent shock waves in England and India. The Ghadar movement was one of the non-communal movements in India. It had an appeal amongst the Sikh *jats*, while Muslim masses and Hindu

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elite largely remained aloof from it. “At this time the Punjabi urban elite were not attuned to accept radical measures. They were willing to agitate, they were willing to strike a note of protest against the government, but they were not willing to accept the cult of the bomb.”

Though this movement could not achieve anything spectacular, it did set a new trend in the body politic of the Punjab. Ghadar literature infused a new spirit among the dormant energies of the people. By transferring its base from a foreign land to native soil, it proved that revolutionary movements could get a breeding ground here. The sacrifices made by the revolutionaries had a deep impact on the educated youth of the province. “Though they failed in armed action, the awakening that their teachings and actions gradually brought to the Punjab countryside shook the British off their balance. The British could no longer depend upon the former loyalty of the Punjabis, particularly the peasant in uniform.”

While the government dealt with the revolutionaries severely, it announced the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms to appease the moderate sections and thus divide the nationalist forces.

The coming years witnessed the rural-urban divide and communal conflicts which largely shaped the politics of the province. The separate electorate given to the Muslims by the Act of 1909, in spite of the other numerical majority, was the clear indication of the government’s intended cleavage amongst the three communities. “We emphatically assert that it is a very unwise and short sighted policy for any government to give unfair preference to the members of one community over that of the other in distribution of its patronage. We do not object to Mohammedans being given a proper share in the education department

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111 Nina Puri, *op.cit.*, p. 188.
but we object, in principle, to the question of putting on many Mohammedans over the heads of senior Hindus simply because they are Mohammedans".113 Thus "the Punjabi elite were now catapulted into a storm of communal fury".114 Commenting on the Minto-Merley reforms, Surendra Nath Banerjee observed that, "the reforms were not worth the paper on which they were drafted".115

Sikhs, due to their status of minority, also made demands on the same lines. They could not get the support of the Congress for the same which resulted in their weaning away from the latter. Though Montagu and Chelmsford recognized the gallant and valuable services of the Sikhs in the army and that everywhere they were in minority but were given only separate franchise right. It was perhaps due to the part played by the rural Sikh masses in the Ghadar movement and then in the Gurudwara Reform movements. "The Sikhs, therefore, were not completely relied upon".116 Thus the unity which had been built by the educated section over the years with considerable labour and thought was destroyed in no time after the declaration of Montford scheme. Ever since, the educated classes had been growing larger and stronger, but had also acquired the limitations of the community they represented. While even moderate Hindus tended to become militant in their stance; the neutral Muslims became staunch Muslim. The respective elite of the communities were now too eager to consolidate their position in the administration. It was indeed the beginning of the partition of the country and the province.

The contribution of the Punjab in the Great War was spectacular, while back home, they brought a new consciousness of liberty for which they had fought a new self confidence and a new determination to

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113 The Panjabee, 4 July, 1906.
114 Nina Puri, op.cit., p. 144.
115 The Panjabee, 4 July, 1906.
educate and enlighten their children. The administration became somewhat panicky at the thought that the energies of the determined soldiers might be directed against the government.\(^{117}\) To perpetuate their ‘raj’ which had always been an underlying principle of the government, it ignored the financial and physical misery the people had suffered overseas. They were expecting a hero’s treatment little realizing that bullets were waiting for them at Jallianwala Bagh.

The Punjab was sitting on a volcano which got erupted by the passing of \textit{Rowlatt Bills} which resulted in the \textit{Jallianwala massacre}. It led to an outcry against the oppressive administration of Michael O’Dwyer and the Government of India. Oppression and complete disregard of legal principles had aroused political interest in the sleepy indifferent masses.\(^{118}\) The interest was not in favour of government but decidedly hostile to it.\(^{119}\) The tragedy of Jallianwal Bagh and the Punjab events produced a feeling of horror and indignation, which resulted in a great outburst of racial hatred. V. Chirol said, “the episode was to ‘dig a sinister gulf’ between the ruling and subject race”. Gandhi wrote, “Plassey laid the foundation of the British Empire, Amritsar had shaken it”.\(^{120}\) “India could never be the same again. The Jallianwala tragedy manifested the parting ways between the British and India”.\(^{121}\) But undeniably the crisis established a link between the elite and the masses, the leader and the led.

The events on the other hand, unmasked the attitude of the traditional elite. The Punjab Legislative Council during 1909-1919, was

\(^{119}\) \textit{Ibid.}
\(^{120}\) Durga Dass, \textit{India from Curzon to Nehru}, New Delhi, 1969, p. 81.
\(^{121}\) Nina Puri, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 167.
an outpost of loyalist sentiment towards the British. “Its members did not even make a semblance of protest at the time of Amritsar tragedy”. Many in a show of solidarity with the government even justified the oppression by O’Dwyer. Lajpat Rai advised the Punjabis, through a letter to *The Tribune*, to “Suffer patiently, firmly and manly”. He also asked them to “organize, educate and agitate”.

During the period of crisis ‘*The Tribune*’ had all along been with the people. With its nationalist viewpoint, it was getting more and more popular with the educated and politically conscious class. It had prepared people mentally for the Non-Cooperation Movement even before it was launched by Gandhi.

The programme of non-cooperation brought different communities of the Punjab on a common platform and the unity that the movement accomplished was not a mean achievement. Gandhi and Lajpat Rai gave a call to the students to leave colleges and boycott the examinations and to join Non-Co-operation movement. Imbued with the national fervour, many students left the government and other educational institutions and joined the National College. Guru Nanak Khalsa College got itself disaffiliated from the University and adopted a system of industrial and vocational education on the lines of National Education. Eight Schools, some of them of high standing were also nationalized. Eighteen new National Schools were started. It was estimated that “The number of students in these institutions was not less than five thousand”. The teachers also did not lag behind in the programme of renunciation and self-sacrifice. Kaumi Vidyapeeth was established at Lahore. Ninety students were on the rolls of this college.

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The aim of these institutions was not only to impart knowledge to the students but also to inculcate in them the love for the motherland.

The aim of these institutions according to Lajpat Rai was to infuse the spirit of political liberty, economic independence, social solidarity and religious freedom amongst the students. It was felt that the British system of education meant “more to enslave us than to free us”. The primary object of these institutions was to weld together the educated and uneducated classes by encouraging the study of vernaculars. It also stressed upon learning of modern sciences of medicine, surgery, pathology, hygiene and engineering etc. “we cannot go back to the old methods and must adopt modern sciences of navigation, commerce, banking, insurance, etc.” By the year 1922, there were 69 national institutions with 8046 scholars in it.

Amongst the educated classes, the lawyers were the most hated by the government. Sir George Campbell once remarked, “If ever the country became too hot to hold (English) it would be the lawyers who would do it”. The unity of the two main communities along with the professionals and the educated elite, unnerved the government. Once again the educated classes led the masses. The fraternization between Hindus and the Muslims shook the morale of the government whose domination over Indians depended upon the mutual hostility between the two communities. The authorities arrested the important leaders of the province. Educational institutions were kept under strict surveillance. The elite were considered by the government as ‘men of cultivated disloyalty’.

127 Lajpat Rai, Problems of National Education in India, London, 1921, pp. 75-76.
129 Shyamala Bhatia, op.cit., p. 216.
130 S.L. Malhotra, op.cit., p. 39.
Under the Martial Law, the toll of the arrests on account of political offence rose to 719 by the end of the year 1921. When the province was in the grip of one of the severest economic, political and moral crisis, the loyalist elements-the traditional elite, were preparing to contest new elections, under the scheme of Dyarchy put forth by the Act of 1919. Ironically, they were to enter Punjab Legislative Council as the ‘representatives’ of the people.

The appeal for the boycott of the councils, profoundly affected the election process. In Lahore, only 700 voters turned up for voting against 15,496 registered electors. In Amritsar, only 5% appeared to cast their vote. At Chakwal not a single Hindu voter came to record his vote and only one Sikh and a few Muslims voted. At Hoshiarpur, of 2,953 only 85 appeared at the polling booth. In the eastern districts, people boycotted the election in spite of the direct and indirect pressure of interested parties. It is a significant revelation that politically and educationally advanced areas showed a lukewarm response to elections, of course with some exceptions. Nevertheless, voting in general constituencies, on the whole, was as high as 32 percent while in rural areas it was still higher. The candidates elected were branded traitors to the national cause and at many places the candidates and the voters were maltreated. “The franchise was extremely limited and more than ninety percent of the voters were illiterate”. This showed that masses still needed to be awakened politically.

Fazl-i-Hussain, Sundar Singh Majithia and Chaudhri Chhotu Ram joined the Council of Governor as Education, Revenue and Agriculture ministers respectively. Fazl-i-Hussain formed a ‘Rural Party’ which later came to be known as National Unionist Party. Its establishment

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131 The Tribune, 4, 5, 8, and 12 December, 1920.
132 Satya M. Rai, op.cit., p. 100.
was welcomed in the official circles, to counter balance the influence of Congress in the urban section. The sectarian interests of the ministers led communalism to take the place of nationalism. The virus of communalism spread in the administration and most unfortunate was its penetration in the sphere of education. Fazl-i-Hussain changed the policy of grant-in-aid to a large number of non-Muslim institutions, and transferred the grants to new Muslim schools which in many cases, were yet to come into existence. A large number of scholarships were awarded to Muslim students to encourage them to join the Anglo-Vernacular schools. During his regime, within a year and a half, the Muslim students in all institutions increased by 42.3%, while the increase among the Hindus was barely 19.6 percent. Manohar Lal, the Education Minister was also alleged to have followed the same policy on communal lines to favour the Hindus institutions. The most serious step taken by Feroz Khan Noon, as Minister of Education, was that he increased the number of Muslim members of the Senate of the Punjab University and reduced that of Hindu members. This was a sinister move of the bureaucracy to communally divide the intelligentsia of the province through the instrument of elected ministers. Rightly had they analyzed that the strength of the nationalistic forces lay in the united educated class and in the collective strength of both, lay the signs of the collapse of the British Governments.

Besides Non-Cooperation Movement, the Punjab witnessed another movement no less in magnitude-Gurudwara Reform Movement. The *Akali* Movement, though itself a product of the general awakening and growing political consciousness in the country seems to have greatly

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133 *The Tribune*, March 26, 1924.
strengthened the forces of nationalism in the Punjab." Essentially it was a religious upheaval, which provided the Sikh community with a new type of middle class consisting of barristers, vakils, school and college teachers and retired military officers. The mahants were getting all support from the government while the rural people were getting some encouragement from the national leaders. Initially, the government adopted an attitude of pretended non-interference but when the hot-blood was raised between the Akalis and the mahants at Nankana and Guru Ka Bagh and other places, government came out of its assumed slumber. After a prolonged discussion on various aspects, the Gurudwara Shrine Act was formulated on 28 June, 1925.

The Punjab was passing through a terrible period of stress and strain and there was visible erosion in the confidence of the educated elite during the British rule. The senior teachers and the students of National College, Lahore formed an association known as Naujawan Bharat Sabha. It was an endeavour to bring the peasants and the labourers together so that they strive to establish a republic through economic independence. To assimilate the revolutionary ideas, to infuse patriotism and to organize the peasants and the labourers, were the main aims of the Sabha. It tried to bring about the mobilization and transformation in values and attitudes of the masses, the rural people, the peasantry and the factory workers. It had close affinity with the Kirti Kisan Sabha-a radical organization of the peasants. Opposition of the Union party brought the Kirtis closer to the Congress. Through them, Congress tried to make inroads into the Central Punjab villages. The Kirti Kisan Party, however, could not extend its influence beyond

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137 Ibid.
Lahore, Amritsar and Lyallpur districts. The leaders made a passionate appeal to all Mazdoor and Kisan Sabhas to join together. The appeal caused a considerable anxiety in the official circle. The government was “alarmed at the possibility of revolutionary ideas penetrating in the rural areas-the recruiting ground of the Indian army”. The organization was ruthlessly suppressed by the government, but before that it had already succeeded in creating a new awareness among the poor peasants and the working classes about their rights.

In the political arena, the role of the educated women was no less significant. The education and enlightenment had infused a new spirit in them. The progress of educational experiments of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century produced a “new woman”. They used English as a common language and communication became possible surpassing language barriers. Encouraged by their male guardians to ‘move with the times’, they formed associations. These organizations became the medium for the expression of women’s opinion. The National Social Conference, The Arya Mahila Samaj, Bharat Mahila Parishad, Sikh Conference, All India Muslim Women’s Conference, Anjuman-e-Khawatin-e-Islam, were some of them. These associations became important vehicles to bring enlightenment amongst the female youth. The women began to define their interests, aims and their role in the society. By the year 1928, the All India Women’s Conference (AIWC) on Educational Reform decided that there could be little progress in educational matters unless harmful social customs were eradicated. The AIWC rejoiced at the passing of Sardha Act of 1929 and called it “a great achievement a personal triumph”.

With a new consciousness, women also began to participate in the political activities in the province. In 1917, an all India movement for

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139 Ibid.
140 Giraldine Frobes, op.cit., p. 88.
women’s suffrage was undertaken. Radha Devi, wife of Lajpat Rai along with other women of the province ceaselessly worked for it and ultimately the Punjab Assembly granted women the right to vote in 1926. There was great rejoicing in the province over the victory of Bibi Gian Kaur who was intermediate and became the first woman to be nominated to the Punjab Assembly in 1930. The persistent efforts of women continued unabated and in 1937, women began to participate in the provincial Assembly elections. But the participations of the women were very low as compared with other states of the country.

The educated women could not remain aloof from the national politics. Gandhi urged women to become a motivating force in the nationalist movements. Women of the Punjab participated in Non-Cooperation Movement, where Sarla Devi gave them a lead. Bhagwati wife of Dina Nath, took active part in the movement and suffered rigorous imprisonment. They took part in Civil-Disobedience processions at Lahore. Mrs. Gray, a journalist from England observed in 1932.

*If women were to be judged by deeds rather than by words, it is within Congress that they have shown the great courage. They have picketed, walked in procession and have gone to prisons.*

When Bhagat Singh and his comrades were sentenced to death, Manmohini led women pickets at three colleges in Lahore viz. Government College, Law College and Christian College. It was a wildly successful demonstration. She was imprisoned for six months. Satyawati Devi told the women to work and fight for the cause of freedom, foreign domination was unbearable. She was arrested and sentenced to two years imprisonment. In prison she contracted pleurisy

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141 *The Tribune*, 16 July, 1932.
142 Giralde Frobes, *op.cit.*, p. 147.
and then tuberculosis but continued to work with Congress. Thus the elite women indeed played a dominant role in the freedom struggle and an important feature was that they took along with them women without any education.\textsuperscript{143} Nationalist politics had been feminized but election politics remained male dominated.

Thus the education restored the long lost self-confidence amongst women. With the insistent efforts of Pushpa Gujral, Harnam Kaur, Bimla Dang, Gurudesh Kaur and many others, equality of the sex became a redeeming feature of the Indian constitution.

Thus the period i.e. 1920-1935 forms a very significant chapter in the political history of the Punjab. Movements like Non-Cooperation, Gurudwara Reform, Babbar \textit{Akali}, Naujawan Sabha were the manifestation of the educated elite and rural masses, of a seething discontent, wide spread anger, and a hatred for the foreign rulers and their rule. The tool of communalism used by the government and willingness of the aristocracy to come under its spell, the ignorance of the masses to fall victim to both, delayed the process of liberation of the country. The country had to pay a heavy price for this delay in the form of continued agitations on the part of the people and ruthless suppression on the part of the government.

The years i.e. 1935-1947 were a period of sectarian politics in the Punjab. Gandhi’s Satyagraha and Quit India Movement could not get an enthusiastic support in the province. “The indifference of the Muslim League, the \textit{Akali} Party and the Hindu \textit{Mahasabaha} to the ‘Quit India Movement’, and the active opposition from the Communist Party, and other similar organizations, accounted for the lack of spontaneous response to the movement in this province”.\textsuperscript{144} They had more or less become the movements of the Congress party. The apathy of Muslims

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 149.  \\
\textsuperscript{144} \textit{The Tribune}, 8 October, 1942.
\end{footnotesize}
towards Congress was an all India phenomenon “but this times even the
Ahrars, whose support was available to the provincial Congress earlier,
decided to keep themselves aloof from the movements”. The Sikhs,
on the other hand, were kept at a distance from Congress by the clever
moves of the government by accepting some of their demands.

An eminent Sikh leader Sardar Joginder Singh was offered
membership of Viceroy’s expanded Council and Sardar Baldev Singh
was inducted into the Punjab Cabinet. As a result of Sikander-Baldve
Singh Pact, some of the communal demands of the community were
conceded. The good offices of these leaders were used to prevent Akalis
from falling in line with the Congress.

By now, it was almost clear to the British that sooner or later they
will have to leave India, under what circumstances, was to be worked
out by them. Lahore Resolution, Cripps Mission, Wavell plan etc. were
the stages of that process only. The elite remained a silent spectator to
the manipulations of the government on the one hand and the attempts
of the sectarian leaders to wrest maximum advantage on the other.

The seeds of communalism sown by the government, all through,
to perpetuate its mighty empire, had grown into a full plant. The reward
given by the British Government to the Indian posterity for the
‘century’s long loyal submission’ of their ancestors was a weak, worn
out, strife-stricken and divided India. The advantages of education, good
governance, message of liberty, social awakening which the country had
acquired from the British appears to be too little in the race of large
scale arson and killing of innocent men, women and children which the
communal venom brought about in 1947.

Thus the educated elite played a dominant role in the politics of
the period. The elite that were nurtured in Western idiom thought that

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they were asking for their legitimate rights and the government thought that the elite were talking sedition. It had become sensitive about its self respect. Newspapers and public platforms were the means they used to spread their message. The educated elite enhanced its position by pointing out society’s imperfections and attempted to rectify it. They were reformers and liberals at first but finally became radicals registering a note of dissent on political matters.