CONCLUSION

Education in India was nothing new when the British introduced their educational system, which was more a political necessity than a pious wish to educate the millions they ruled. To introduce the language of the conquerors seems to be an obvious means of assimilating a conquered people to them. No sooner did they acquire the supremacy in India than a sudden need for educated Indians to staff government offices was generated. It ushered in an era of western education in the country. Macaulay saved the government from the onerous task of learning the language of the subject people. Rather the ruled were to learn the language of the rulers. On the grounds of economy, improvement and security of the country, he introduced English language. It was also believed that the benefits of western education would create sentiments of friendliness and gratitude towards those who bestowed the gifts of the modern knowledge upon them. The decision caused a great intellectual ferment bringing about an ‘Indian Renaissance’, an era of unprecedented social, moral and political progress. Through the medium of English education, the country was plunged into the stream of western thought and progress.

Punjab was spared much of the uncertainties of educational policy resulting from various controversies which marked the initial period elsewhere, for this ‘land of five rivers’ was the last to be included in British empire. By then policies had already been laid down and formulated. The Despatch of 1854 is a climax in the history of Indian education. The Despatch still lies at the root of our modern system of education. The people were offered compensation as against the earlier somewhat uncompromising attitude of Lord Macaulay, on the question of vernaculars.
For the first time, the British authorities realized their duty of conferring upon people the vast moral and material blessings which flow from the diffusion of useful knowledge. In pursuance of its recommendations, the Department of Public Instruction was set up in the Punjab in 1856. The people were somewhat assured that at last the government would shoulder the responsibility of imparting education to them. The grant-in-aid system indicated its policy of *laissez faire* in the field of education. But the people were soon disillusioned, for consciously or unconsciously, the vernaculars still remained ignored; education was still not available to large number of people, and western education continued to be the basis of Indian education.

Through the liberality of Lord Ripon, an Indian Education Commission was instituted in 1882 in order to enquire into and improve the working of the dispatch. Punjab provincial committee, formulated to determine the ways and methods to put the recommendations of the Commission into practice, emphasized the extension of primary education and recognized its exclusive claim on local and provincial funds. The curriculum of the schools was made more compact. Improvements were brought about in the training of primary teachers, grant-in-aid rules were revised in consultation with the managers of aided schools. As a result, progress was witnessed in the following years in the fields of primary and secondary education.

The expansion of education, however, was not without its fallouts. The neglect of mother tongue as the medium of instruction and absence of vocational courses were among its glaring weaknesses. The highest education a child could obtain through the mother tongue was limited to the middle school stage only. It encouraged the monstrous and maleficent spirit of cramming. The Anglo-Vernacular education was rapidly growing in the estimation of the people. The policy of
preparation for services had been the chief, if not the sole objective of education. The indigenous schools were replaced by elementary schools. Problem of mass education was not squarely faced. Sufficient funds were not devoted to this branch of education. The collegiate and vocational educations were overlooked by the commission. In view of the state withdrawal policy, private enterprise took to the field of higher and technical education.

After passing through a long path of hope and despair, ultimately, the province got the proud privilege of having its own university in 1882. It was the first university to be established outside the presidency towns.

The senate of the university enjoyed the privilege of being consulted, a rare position not enjoyed by earlier universities of India. While the university was passing through the initial hazards, Lord Curzon appeared on the scene. The laissez faire policy enunciated in 1854 and more vigorously applied in 1884, was formally abandoned by Curzon, as its results were considered both educationally and politically dangerous. Educational institutions were regarded more akin to breeding ground for sedition. Senates were reorganized; strict conditions for affiliation of the colleges were imposed. Government control on text books to be prescribed was made more rigid, loyal teachers took over the control of schools and colleges. The motive behind all these measures was the safety of the British rule and not the enlightenment of the people. It infuriated the nationalists and gave rise to militant nationalism. Revolutionary patriotism would not have born, had evolutionary patriotism not been strangulated. Although, Curzons reforms appeared to be harsh they but were practical and perhaps were also needed. They did improve the tone of education and gave concrete guide lines to follow.
The period from 1905-1919, was a period of all round-expansion in the field of primary, secondary, collegiate and female education. By the end of the year 1925, compulsion was introduced in 42 towns and 451 rural areas. There was steady development in the number of secondary schools. By the end of March 1931, the number of secondary schools rose to 3,771. In the field of higher education, intermediate colleges were opened. In 1926, the number of intermediate colleges in the province rose to 12. Attention was paid to the development of professional and technical education. The total number of female pupils in the province was 85,000 in 1922 which rose to 121,000 in 1927.

Yet the fact was that the progress of education in Punjab during the period of dyarchy was much less satisfactory than what appears from the official reports and certainly far below the expectations of the nationalists. It was disheartening to note that even at the end of 1930, no more than 5.9 percent of the total population of the Punjab was in recognized schools. The position of women was no way different. During the quinquennium 1927-32, the percentage of female literacy was 1.74. The intermediate colleges proved to be a bad compromise between a school and a college. No systematic effort was made to fulfill the need for education for the masses. Due to the increase in population a gap between the literate and illiterate kept on increasing.

Compulsion was still a dream to be fulfilled. Local bodies were unwilling and incapable of carrying out the policy of compulsion due to lack of qualified teachers and financial crunch. The policy of consolidation followed by Hartog Commission further retarded the progress of education.

It may be remembered that the British authorities in India were not seriously interested in educating the masses. England had been treating India no better than ‘colonial exploitation’. Under dyarchy, it
was hoped that things will improve with the charge of popular ministers of the department of education. But unfortunately, the biggest obstacle in the development of education in the province was financial stringency. Moreover, the minister could not have a free hand in the working of the education department. Still more, virus of communalism had penetrated in the field of education too. The alien bureaucracy gave it every possible encouragement because in it they found a weapon to curb the growth of nationalist forces in the province.

With the inauguration of provincial autonomy in 1937, ministers were given more freedom in the working of their departments but the outbreak of Second War frustrated all hopes. All resources of the country, money, men and material were diverted towards war. The broad higher ideals of education enunciated by Gandhiji in his ‘Wardah Scheme’ did not get the support from the government. Thus all these years during the British period, there was no dearth of schemes, but for their implementation, financial resources and proper environment were needed, both could not be provided.

It cannot however be denied that during the British rule the lines on which the educational set up ought to be formulated got clearly marked. A peep into the statistics during 1882 to 1947 shows the development in numbers in all the fields of education. There was one Arts College, 25 high schools, 206 middle schools and 1559 primary schools in 1882, which rose to 44,445; 2971 and 6230 respectively in 1944-45. Similarly, the increase in the female institutions had been from one high school, 4 middle schools, 322 primary schools in 1882 to 70 high schools, 257 middle schools and 2270 primary schools in 1944-45. There was no women’s Arts College existent in 1882 and the number rose to 8 in 1944-45.
Improvements were brought about in the primary education by employing better qualified teachers, establishing training institutions and normal schools, and promising improved pay scales and other service benefits to the teachers. A new curriculum consisting of a combination of literary instruction and practical training in certain subjects was devised. The variable grants assessed from year to year were converted into fixed grants. This led to the increase in the number of aided primary schools. The British were conscious of the fact that the western influence into Indian life through the chief channel of education would make the Indian people English in taste and manners, thought and opinion. As a result of this, the stability of the British Empire in India would be ensured. Thus in a calculated pursuit for the western education, they crushed the educational system which was prevalent in this country from times immemorial. The best statesmanship is not one which breaks rudely with the old traditions, but one which causes the old to run smoothly into the new. Very early, men like Munro, Elphinstone and Adam had suggested that the indigenous system of education had great potentialities and that it could be expanded and improved to become a great instrument of mass education. Contrary to this, the British set up a rival system of education and allowed the indigenous system to decay.

The traditional system of education was thus uprooted and an educational system like a top-heavy inverted pyramid was built upon the assumption that if higher education was provided to the top classes, it would somehow or the other filter down to the masses. Downward Filtration Theory was unsound in principle and unsatisfactory in results. For one thing, the state could not divest itself of so fundamental a responsibility as the education.
There was a great change in the policy of the government towards secondary schools. The principle of the ‘state withdrawal’ was abandoned and the government assumed the duty of maintaining existing institutions as models to the private enterprise. The number of schools and scholars increased considerably. The progress may be ascribed to the pressure of the grant in aid rules which demanded a certain minimum of efficiency as a qualification for the aid and to the increased efficiency of the teaching staff. The contribution of private enterprise cannot be overlooked for without their earnest and energetic co-operation, education could not have faced the hurdles placed before it. In this context, the role of the Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha movement, Dev Samaj, Ahmadyas and Anjumans had been laudable. It was mainly with the help of these managements that the schooling was made available even in the remote corners of the Punjab. They also managed some sound institutions for higher education.

But here again, grave defects in organization were visible all through. The control of secondary education remained unsolved. There was uneven distribution of schools. Dominance of matriculation examination still persisted; knowledge of English led to employment and was therefore equivalent to vocational training. The students were still not spared from the rigour of knowing a foreign language. It is said that “if you want to destroy a particular community, strike at the language spoken by that community”. It cannot be denied that knowledge of English language made accessible to Indians the vast and expanding treasures of modern learning. Nevertheless, English as a medium of study did have certain cramming implications. The use of English raised the class barrier even higher. It was felt that our education had a parasitic existence, living as it were on a foreign language, which had given it some meager nourishment, but has not
enabled it to attain full stature and development. Thus its use as a substitute for Indian modern language was a mistaken stroke of policy. To give millions knowledge of English was to enslave them. The foundation that Macaulay had laid of education had enslaved us. He might not have had any such intention, but it did have unfortunate results. The dread of examination clouded the horizon of the students during the whole career. Increasing unemployment of the educated classes caused wide spread dissatisfaction with the present system of education. A school with a few notable exceptions was much the same as it was in 1904 and had but little changed from what it was as far as back 1884.

The number of colleges in 1944-45 increased to 44 with 22099 students on roll. Tutorial system, assignment system, discussion or criticism lessons were some of the innovations brought about in the teaching at colleges. The principals felt that the method “has yielded much better results than the purely lecturing method”. Social and cultural awakening was brought about through different societies like literary, debating, scientific and athletic societies and boat clubs, health clubs and photographic clubs etc. Games and sports too created a sense of discipline among the students.

But the utilitarian aim of the education narrowed its scope. The education which should have been an end in itself began to be regarded as a road to lucrative jobs only. It was rare to find that a college career had inspired a student with love for learning. In spite of various attempts made by the government, it could not check the high percentage of failures in the university examinations and the low standard of university teaching. Complaints were often made about the high cost of education. Throughout the British period, several attempts were made to reform the university education, but no attempt was made to reconstruct
the university system to suit the need of the country. Government’s neglect of collegiate education was also due to the fact that it had started identifying unrest with higher education. Lawyers were the most detested by them. In 1907, according to Risley Resolution, strict regulations were passed to control the activities of the students.

The technical education was far from satisfactory during the colonial rule. The nationalists were highly critical of the British Governments’ policy towards it. Undoubtedly, it was not their aim to bring advancement in technology but it was their need that vocational schools and colleges were established. Even they were only a drop in the ocean. The training in these institutions had little contact with the educational system and was, therefore, largely in fructuous. The insistent demand for the increased facilities for technical training was indicative rather of a desire for employment than a desire for education. It answered the immediate needs of both, the government as well as the people. For the people earned their livelihood by getting jobs and the government in return found convenience in running the administration. But such a system was detrimental to the wider interests of the nation. The British authorities thought that the industrialization of India would starve the factories of Lancashire. This sense of commercialization was therefore, the fundamental cause of the catastrophe in the field of technical education. Moreover, such an education would have involved a large expenditure which the government was unwilling to incur. Thus the neglect of higher and technical education was the ‘corollary to colonial set-up’.

Not only the system of education produced nothing but clerks, but also it rendered the recipients of education unfit to follow even their ancestral occupations. The excessively literary and insufficient
vocational education produced a growing educated proletariat in the country.

In the field of female education, too, private enterprise achieved a considerable success. While in 1856, the government policy was to ‘let the question of female education stand over till the ordinary establishments were all set on foot’; it was due to the untiring efforts opinion for the education of their daughters and sisters. So much so the district boards began to open new schools through the agency of private bodies. The board selected a suitable place for a school and provided funds for its maintenance but asked some local religious association to undertake the management. Yet, the progress as a whole was far from satisfactory. Villages were denied even the humblest means of acquiring bare literacy as most of the high schools and even middle schools were opened in towns. The belief that education of women is essential to national advancement was wide spread, but the means to acquire it were limited. Financial stringency had retarded the spread of education as a whole and female education in particular. The small number of colleges could hardly suffice the needs.

One of the determinants of socio-political change was the introduction of education. The development of education by the British, though it was motivated by the political, administrative and economic needs, led to social awakening in the province. The education liberalized, rationalized and modernized the social fabric. There was a change in the standard of living, dress, diet, style of eating, and manners etc. The spread of education modernized the society. There was a value based change-updating of knowledge in literature and science and the cultivation of humanitarianism, equalitarism and secularism etc. The western education extended the horizon of the people. The struggle of the educated elite against the iron hard customs of caste system, purdah
and child marriage minimized the rigidity of these taboos. It 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 sex. So empowering was their appeal that they became the basis of the constitution of free India.

The literacy renaissance and social awakening brought about by education kindled a sense of nationality amongst the people. Indian political awakening was one of the main benefits which followed from the study of English. It gave the youth, the history of England, with its struggle for liberty, its revolutions, its literature, were full of inspiration for freedom. English did have a unifying influence in our country. It was the language from which we learnt not only the principles of responsible government and democracy but the ringing words of freedom and human dignity which were used on many platforms to fight the British rulers. It not only gave the message of democratic institutions to the educated elite but also infused democratic spirit in them. It served to unite the varying forces among the Indian population which the confusion in languages had made impossible. Western education produced a class which led the nationalist movements. Movements like Swadeshi, Agrarian revolt, Non-cooperation, Gurudwara Reform, Babbar 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 religious reform organizations and the educated people performed the function of consolidation and social mobilization which laid the basis for the mass political movements of later years. These movements consolidated heterogeneous elements of educated elite into homogenous class but
unfortunately, at the same time divided homogenous educated elite into heterogeneous religious groups.

In spite of the great services which the study of English rendered, there is another side of the picture also. The first item on its debit side was the fact that the government failed to evolve a national system of education. While the education in England was a growing movement responding to new impetus in national life, Indian education remained out of contact and out of tune with national life. Our educational policy was devised by authors who were foreigners. The foreign government was, by its peculiar position, at once unwilling and ill-qualified to undertake this task. They could not go deep into the religious and social customs of the people. The natural result was that the educational system in India was and remained all along alien in character, unrelated to the genius of the country. Nationalists resented this alien element in the education and considered the foreignness of the education as the most regrettable of all the things. “Of all forms of slavery, slavery in education is the most dangerous”. Due to the adoption of a policy which was incoherent with the culture of the Indians, the British failed to evolve a national system of education in the country.

The exigencies of the political situation on the other hand absorbed a good deal of their time. Again, it was a sad truth that such an important subject, like education, was never given the priority and proper place in the administrative schemes of the British-Indian administrators. Cultural issues, amongst which education occupies the foremost place, did not receive their due attention; such issues were plainly neglected in comparison with more insistent political problems.

Though the British doubtlessly failed to evolve a national system of education, nevertheless, a common system of education introduced by them throughout the country brought about a community feeling and
materially helped to strengthen the national feeling. It is an admitted fact that with all its short-comings, British system of education has stood the test of time, and it was because of its inherent potentialities that the same structure continues with some modifications, till today. They have indeed given a centralized system of education.

Even after fifty years of independence, the achievements in the field of education in the province are far from satisfactory. We were the masters, all these years, but we could not evolve the educational system according to our needs, and priorities. We were to fix our own targets, our own goals, our own ideals. After half a century of independence, we have attained only 58.5% literacy. 65.6% among men and 50.4% among women. If countries like Russia, China, Israel could attain their targets in education so very soon, why not India? In India, Punjab could attain only a humble position of being seventeenth in comparison to other states in the filed of literacy. The position of the backward classes is even worse in the field of education. Punjab is twentieth in position in the Indian list of education of this class.

The other challenge in the field of education is the wastage at the primary stage. 23% of children do not join middle schools. The vocational courses have been started in 345 schools only benefiting a small number of 11,530 students. This figure is only 1.6% of the total students seeking admission in senior-secondary schools, which is quite negligible. The need of the hour is not only the opening of vocational colleges but to provide employment to the students coming out of professional institutions. A proper scheme needs to be envisaged for them. Punjab, being an agricultural province, agro-based industries can check the unemployment.

A prosperous state like Punjab is content with spending less than 3% of the G.D.P. on education. Though education was brought under
concurrent list in 1976, yet no fixed percentage of the G.D.P. has been allocated to it. There is an urgent need to make elementary education as one of the fundamental rights. Even Nobel laureate Amritya Sen has established that the economy of the state is directly linked with the services like education and health care. The so called natural calamities like famines and droughts have been linked with lack of education, health care etc. The planners have failed to gauge the impact of education on the economy of the country. Education should be on the top of the agenda of the government. Development of youth, mobilization and educational reforms are required and the role of the teachers should be prominently dominant. He is to function as a catalytic agent and community worker endeavoring constantly towards the building of a democratic, socialist and secular form of society. He must occupy pivotal and privileged position to wage a war against poverty, ignorance and superstition and to eradicate other social evils effectively.

Education should no longer be the privilege of the elite or the concomitant of a particular age. To an increasing extent, it must embrace the whole of society and the entire life span of an individual. The shift ought to be from ‘Teaching’ to ‘Learning’.