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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

There were many changes that came in education system in India. Education board was established for better education. In this research Paper briefly read about the education board and the nature of society of Punjab With the establishment of East India Company, the supremacy of the British in India increased but education in general was neglected. With the efforts of some Christian missionaries only few institutions were established. There were many changes that happened in the development of education. Many efforts were made by social organizations to re-establish the education system in different States of India.

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INTRODUCTION

*The history of education is a popular subject in th*e west but unfortunately its study in India is grossly neglected or left to a small and scattered group or education, some of whom are unaware of the broad trends of historical scholarship. There has hardly been any serious reach in the subject and the few books that we have here on the story of education are largely based on government of India records and reports. These books present a huge mass of facts and figures without an in-depth analysis of the cause and effect relationship in the developments or changes that appear on the surface of education in India. Before independence there were two India's- one was the India controlled by the Indian princes and the other was the India controlled by the British Raj. In the last few decades there have been changes both in the concepts of education and history. While education has increasingly become a social , political, and economic issue since the fairly recent emergence of the countries in the third world, comprehensive changes have taken place in around in academic circles. Some of the areas of history, comparative history, political history, social history, and intellectual and cultural history. According to some scholars, education had been unknown to India and the Education system in India was the creation of the East India Company. Among those who were able to retire to a successful life in England after a career in India, Charles Grant shines as a bright star. The reason why Grant is singled out here for a special mention is because of his contributions to the development of a modern education system in India. Charles Grant's contribution to British rule in India has been investigated a few decades ago by Professor A.T. Embree but educationists in India generally tend to overlook his role in the introduction of Western education in India. We shall presently see that he was the first Englishman, at least four decades before Macaulay, to argue for the introduction of English education with a view to introducing Christianity in India. Grant was no missionary so why did he want to proselytize the Indians? Grant who had come to India in 1767, acquired an immense for tune, and led a hectic life till 1786 when through family mishaps and close contact with the Chaplain David Brown and the Civilian

George Udny, underwent a great change. He was appalled at the degeneration of the Indian society following the breakup of the Mughal Empire in the late eighteenth century. What was the state of the society in India as Grant saw it? In India, religion has always been a very strong spiritual force which binds the people together but at the time of Grant it had sunk into the grossest form of superstition. Every stone and every tree had acquired the importance of a deity and every phenomenon of nature was taken as a manifestation of the divine will. People had begun the practice of throwing children into the sea for propitiating the gods and of swinging the devotees in iron hooks during certain religious festivals. Overzealous devotees also practiced various kinds of self-tortures such as Dharma in order to atone for their sins. The degenerated Brahmins had begun to impose their self-motivated interpretation of the scriptures upon the credulous simplicity of ignorant people, who looked upon their words aslaw which no one could contradict. Social life was degraded. Many abuses, some of the most gruesome nature, had crept into the society. Infanticide was widely practiced in Central India, especially among the Rajput's. The custom of sati or self-immolation of widows was widely prevalent and was looked upon as a sacred act. Caste, once based upon the functions of individuals, had become a rigid system which kept its various branches in water tight compartments, although the members had ceased to adhere to the functions originally assigned to them. Only the Brahmins had maintained their monopoly of priestly position. This had naturally led to grave abuses because it had given birth precedence over all other consideration and had consigned to the most degraded state of existence, some of the low caste people like the pariahs and untouchables, mere contact with one of whom was sufficient to make one lose one's caste. The aristocracy which had been hit most by the political instability, had degraded themselves in debauchery and dissipation. Kulinism, originally intended to maintain the purity of blood line of the higher classes, had degenerated into child marriage and polygamy. Where the higher castes had sunk to such low levels, the women could not have been expected to have a better fate. Married at quite an early age they got little, if any, opportunity of acquiring education and were kept in seclusion or purdah[1].

Grant felt that these abuses of the Indian society could be removed by the introduction of Christianity. So in 1790 when he returned home, he worked for it with greater vigor since the time for the renewal of the Company's Charter was drawing near, thus providing for an opportunity of bringing the case for evangelization of India before the Parliament, and thereby also forcing the hands of the Directors who did not allow the missionaries to come to India for proselytization. However, the idea had to be dropped when King George III, having been apprised of the scheme, was reluctant to support it chiefly in consequence of the alarming progress of the French Revolution and the proneness of the period to movements subversive of the established order of things Wilberforce, MP for York, with whom Grant had been in contact before he came to London in 1790, then advised Grant to produce a paper showing a plan for the diffusion of knowledge in Indi rather than for the propagation of Christianity. Grant picked the suggestion and wrote: Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, particularly in the Respect of Morals And on the means of improving it.

In his treatise which Grant wrote in 1792 and published at London in 1797, he charged the Hindus with dishonesty, corruption, fraud, mutual hatred and distrust, and described their customs such as sati as barbarous; and the Muslims with haughtiness, perfidy, licentiousness and lawlessness and asserted that the inter course of the two communities had led to the further debasement of both because each had imbibed the vices of the other. Grant blamed the East India Company for viewing those grave evils with apathy and contended that it was under no obligation to protect the creed of the Hindus which was monstrous and "subversive of the first principles of reason, morality and religion." As a remedy to all these evils, Grant suggested a "healing principle", namely, the supersession of the existing religions by Christianity through the dissemination of the science and literature of Europe, "a key which would at once open a world of new ideas" to them. Grant stated that the long intercourse between the Indians and the Europeans in Bengal rendered it feasible to use English as the medium of instruction. Moreover, he said, a knowledge of the English language would immediately place the whole range of European knowledge within their reach, while translation of English books into the Indian languages would take a long time and would be less efficacious. Grant also urged the substitution of English for Persian as the official language because that would induce the Indians to learn it. He urged the establishment of English schools under teachers "of good moral character", hoping that very soon the pupils taught in these schools would themselves become the teachers of English to their countrymen. In conclusion, he triumphantly asserted, "the true cure of darkness is light. The Hindus because they are ignorant and their errors have never been fairly laid before them[2]."

Grant's observations were reflections of the two forces at home, one unplanned, the other purposeful-the Industrial Revolution and the Evangelical Movement-in putting forward new social values. The Industrial Revolution created a new class of men with power and authority to set beside the old aristocratic, landowning leadership, where the latter had depended upon inheritance in a fixed hierarchical society and had set an example of grand, even extravagant living, the new men rose by personal effort, by hardwork and by frugality. A new economic order developed a new code of social values and behavior in answer to its unspoken need. Contemporaneously, a religious revival affected England which though it had its starting point in Vital Religion, in personal conversion, also served to promote such social virtues as frugality, sobriety and industry. Among the lower wonders of society it was Methodism which inspired "the civilization, the industry and sobriety of great numbers of the laboring part of the country." Among the upper classes the impulse was provided by the evangelicals and by such persons as Hannah More. They numb ins their ranks men such as Milner of Queen's College or Simeon of King's College, Cambridge, the merchant Zachary Macaulay, Wilberforce, Henry Thornton the banker and James Stephen, the lawyer, men of the class from which many of the Company's servants were drawn. In 1793 Wilberforce and Hannah More gathered round Joseph Venn, the Rector of Clapham and were there joined by Charles Grant, by Sir John Shore, Stephen, Thornton, Macaulay and others. These Claphamities were, perhaps, social conservatives in their acceptance of the order of the society, but they were radical in their determination to secure a reformation of manners and a

[1] C.Y.Chitmani, *Indian Social Reform*, Madrassa Press, Bombay, 1901, p.31.

[2] *Ibid*,p.38.

new righteousness in the upper ranks of society[3]. When Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control set up in 1784 by Pitt's India Act to supervise the activities of the Court of Directors, was shown Grant's manuscript containing his observations, he asked his Secretary, William Cabell, to write a note on it. Cabell emphasized the political advantages that could be derived from developing an education policy based on Grant's Observations. He mentioned that a common language would draw the ruler and the ruled into closer contact and the introduction of European education would lead to the removal of many abuses from which the people were suffering due to their "false system of beliefs and a total want of right instruction among them." However, when the subject was debated upon on the occasion of the renewal of the Company's Charter, the Attorney-General and the Solicitor General grouped the clauses into a Bill explicitly stating that the real end sought was to send missionaries and school masters to India for the ultimate conversion of Indians. And this was fully detrimental to the trading interests of the Company dominated by men with long experience in India who considered that any such move would result in political unrest in that country.

They condemned the Bill and through some of their connections in both the Houses of Parliament maneuvered to defeat it. And thus was lost Charles Grant's unique opportunity to become a pioneer in *the introduction of Western education in India.* The failure of Grant's plan of introducing Western education in India to facilitate conversion of Indians into Christianity did not mean an end to his effort to send evangelists to India. This he did indirectly. It was customary, at this time, for the Chairman of the Court of Directors to select Chaplains for Europeans in India, and Grant who subsequently came to hold the Chair, availed himself of this opportunity of sending out ardent evangelists like C Buchanan and Henry Martin. There were also some among the retired officials of the East India Company who shared Grant's views on the introduction of Western education as a step towards proselytization for the political benefits that it would accrue. For example, Sir John Shore after his retirement from the governor generalship of Bengal observed: "Until our subjects there [India] shall be animated with us by a community of religious faith, we shall never consider our dominion as secure against the effects of external attack or internal commotion."

During the decade that followed the Charter Act of 1793, the evangelicals in England focused their attention towards finding some means of avoiding the restrictions imposed on the passage of missionaries to India by the terms of the Act. William Carey, a Baptist Missionary and a shoemaker by profession was sent to India in 1793 in a Danish ship by the London Baptist Missionary Society and his example was followed in 1799 by two other missionaries who came in an American ship and settled down in Serampore, a Danish colony, not far away from Calcutta which was the headquarters of the East India Company in India. Carey had settled down with the help of George Udny in Dinajpore where he opened a free boarding school for poor children who were given instructions in Sanskrit, Persian and Bengali as well as in the doctrines of Christianity. In 1800, Carey joined Marshman and Ward in Serampore with the help of a paper manufactory and the printing press which soon began to receive large commissions from the Company's establishments in Bengal, they carriedon their work for the dissemination of education and propagation of Christianity among the people of Bengal. As decided by Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773, the Charter Act of the East India Company was to be renewed every twenty years. Accordingly, when the term of the Company's Charter was due to expire in 1813, the missionaries were determined to make this occasion another trial of strength in Parliament with the Directors. In February 1812, a Committee was formed consisting of Wilberforce, Grant, Thornton, Stephen and Babington to arrange an interview on behalf of the various religious organizations in Britain. Soon there was dissension among the missionaries themselves due to the jealousy of the dissenters of the Church of England but Wilberforce managed to keep them together. He persuaded the Church of Scotland to take the lead of the Non-conformists and himself along with Grant interviewed Liverpool, the Prime Minister, who put them off with some vague promises. Moreover, Buckinghamshire, the President of the Board of Control and Castlereagh appeared cold and hostile and refused to countenance any change of the existing system[4]. The reluctance on the part of Castlereagh and Buckinghamshire was, however, related to the opposition of the Directors of the East India Company, who produced an imposing amount of evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons against the des patch of missionaries to India by important people who had long experiences of India and were esteemed highly by their countrymen. All emphasized the unfavorable political consequences that would follow the episcopal establishment in India. Malcolm" observations were representative of the views of the East Indi Company officials who deposed before the Committee. While admitting the blessings which Christianity would bestow c Indians, he warned the Committee that its introduction into India would have the most dangerous consequences for the stability the empire which depended on the "general division of the communities and their sub-division into various castes and tribes because all these elements would then be united in a gene opposition to any scheme which they might think would lead their conversion. It was at this stage, that Zachary Macaulay, encouraged Wilberforce, organized a campaign calling on the missionaries to send petitions to the Parliament for the unrestraint dispatch of missionaries to India. As a result between February and June 1813, no less than 837 petitions were presented. This extraordinary effort produced almost immediate effect. Liverpool and Buckinghamshire told Wilberforce that they were willing to establish a bishopric in India and to authorize the Board of Control to grant licenses to missionaries to proceed to India. In the House of Lords, the missionary question was not discussed at all, and none took the slightest notice of the vast body of evidence which the Directors of the East India Company had produced against them. The new Act renewing the Company's privileges for a further period of twenty years was passed on 21 July 1813. An episcopate with archdeacons was set up in India and Board of Control was authorized to grant licenses to missionaries to proceed there. The question of dissemination of education among Indians was also taken up into consideration and a Clause to this effect was introduced in Parliament by a former Advocate General in Calcutta and was passed after a slight modification. This Clause (43rd) empowered the Governor-General to appropriate "a sum of not less than one lac of rupees" in each year out of "the surplus territorial revenues" for the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the

[3] J.Ghosh, *Higher Education in Bengal under the British Rule,* Bashi Publishers, Calcutta, 1965, p.53.

[4] A.N.Basu, *Education in Modern India*, Sindi Press, Calcutta, 1947, p.120.

introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India[5]. J. A. Richter, in his History of Missions in India, has suggested that the Clause 43 which spoke of the revival and improvement of literature and of the encouragement of the learned natives of India was created as "a reliable counterpoise, a protecting break water against the threatened deluge of missionary enterprise" enshrined in the Charter Act of 1813. It is possible that the sup porters of this Clause were influenced by the Orientalists in Calcutta who had been agitating for some time past for more funds for the maintenance of the Calcutta Madrassa and the Benares Sanskrit College, and for the revival and improvement of classical learning of India. In March 1811, Minto, Governor-General of India between 1806 and 1813, had sent home a minute which definitely represented and endorsed the views of the Orientalists in India. In that minute, Minto spoke about the decay and the neglect of Indian classical learning and taught persons which could be traced to the want of that encouragement which was formerly afforded to it by princes, chieftains and opulent individuals under the native governments. It is seriously to be lamented," he had observed that a nation particularly distinguished for its love and successful cultivation of letters in other parts of the empire should have failed to extend its fostering care to the literature of the Hindu's, and to aid in opening to the learned in Europe the repositories of that literature."

An Estimate of the Part played by Bentinck and Macaulay in the introduction of English Education in India: In India Thomas Babington Macaulay is fully credited with the introduction of English education officially though the necessary order on the subject was issued by Bentinck, the Governor General of India, on 7 March 1835, after going through a long the historical minute written by the former on 2 February 1835 at the latter's request. Needless to say, in issuing this order on English education, Bentinck put his own political career in India at enormous risk. For, according to the rules of the East India Company the Governor General in India could not initiate any important action without first obtaining the approval of its executive body, the Court of Directors in London. Since Bentinck took the decision within a few weeks of receiving the papers from the General Committee of Public Instruction, it was clear that the Governor General did not have the necessary time to obtain the required sanction of the Court of Directors. In those days of steamship navigation, a dispatch from Calcutta used to take not less than three months to reach London. This simple fact does not need the scholarship of a Spear or a Ball hatchet to prove or disprovethat Bentinck acted without the authority of the East India Company in London. Writing on the subject more than a hundred years later in The Education of India Arthur Mayhew argued thatBentick took the decision without reading. Macaulay's minute and was solely motivated by Macaulay's threat to resign. Such an argument is contrary to the image of Bentick that has emerged through recent researches as a true child of his age[6]. Bentick who came to India as the Governor- General in July 1828 was a firm believer in utilitarian principles. In a farewell dinner at Grote's house in December 1827 just on the eye of his departure for India, he had said to James Mill; I am going to British India but I shall not be Governor- General. It is you that will be Governor-General.' A man of great energy, vigor and action he utilized the long period of peace enjoyed by his Government to tackle every problem that his administration faced in India- he was the person who made sati illegal in 1829 and took steps to stop other social evils like *Thugi* and infanticide. He also persuaded young Indians to learn English language by throwing open subordinate positions in judicial and revenue branches to economy. In a letter to the General committee of public instruction on 26 June 1829 he observed; 'it is the wish and admitted policy of the British Government to render its own language gradually and eventually the language of public business throughout the country, and practical degree of encouragement to the execution of this project'. As a mark of respect to the wishes of Governor-General, the General committee of public instruction added English classes to the 'Benaras Sanskrit College' in 1830 thereby providing for English classes in all the important oriental institutions in Calcutta, Delhi and Banaras[7]. One reason why Bentinck was so keen on introducing English education was because he considered it not only to be a "cure for the kind of social evils that he had to deal with at the very beginning of his administration in India but also a key to the improvement of the country. In this respect he fully shared with James Mill the view that Indian society was decadent and the key to its regeneration lay in the introduction of Western knowledge and science. In a letter to Mancy on 1 June 1834, Heer plained: "General education is my panacea for the regeneration of India.

The ground must be prepared and the jungle cleared away before the human mind can receive, with any prospect of real' benefit, the seeds of improvement... You will anticipate my entire dissent from those who think it better that the natives should remain in ignorance. I cannot regard the advantage of ignorance to the governors or the governed. If our rule is bad as I believe it to be, let the natives have the means through knowledge, to represent their grievances and to obtain redress if their own habits, morals or way of thinking are inconsistent with their own happiness and improvement, let them have the means provided by our greater intelligence of discovering their errors. Therefore, of every plan by which the human mind can be instructed and of course elevated... Such a plan came through Macaulay's minute of 2 February 1835 as an expert advice on the subject and Bentinck immediately acted on it. Macaulay, whose interest in consolidating the Britishempire by the proportion of English laws and English culture began quite early in life when he grew up as the son of Zachary Macaulay in the circle of the Clapham evangelists and gave evidence of it in his Parliamentary speech on 10 July 183 on the occasion of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter, held similar views on the subject with Bentinck. And it will not be unreasonable to surmise that there had been earlier discussions on it either at the time when they were together in the Nilgiris in the summer of 1834 or at the time when Macaulay was appointed by Bentinck as President of the General Committee of Public Instruction in December 1834 at a time when the Committee was seized with the controversy on the future education policy of India. Assuming there had been no such occasions, it was still possible for Macaulay to know the Governor-General's mind through CE Trevelyan, a staunch Anglicism and a great favorite among Bentinck's officials, who was also married to Macaulay's sister.

The threat of resignation held out by Macaulay if his recommendations on English education were not accepted was

[5] S.Gopal, *British policy in India*, 1858-1905, Cambridge press, London, 1907, p.132.

[6] S.Gopal, *Development of Universitty* Education 1916-1920, Bashi Publications, Calcutta,1998

[7] *Ibid*, p.155.

not a threat meant for Bentinck but a subtle challenge thrown to the opponents of English education in India[8]. The reason why Bentinck issued the order without obtaining the approval of the Court of Directors was because of the fact that following the return of the Tory Party to power in England Bentinck was contemplating his retirement as Governor-General of India by the end of March 1835. He did not want to leave the fate of a subject so dear to his heart to his successor and took immediate steps to decide on it on 7 March 1835. And he did so at a price--he earned the displeasure of the Court of Directors to such an extent that back home he withdrew from the affairs of the Company and led a secluded life. The Court of Directors on the other hand almost decided to reverse the order of 7 March1835 by sending a dispatch to Calcutta-the draft of the dispatch was almost ready by October 1836 but was never sent as Hob house, the President of the Board of Control, did not accept the draft dispatch sent to him by Carnac, Chairman of the Court of Directors, under pressure from Auckland, the Governor-General of India. Macaulay's minute became a secretarial sensation from theVery moment of its composition on 2 February 1835. It shot him to further prominence in England and in India[9]. A great change came with the arrival of Hardings as the Governor- General of India. Although distracted by war with the Sikhs, the last great political opponent of the company in India, Hardings was able to devote a great deal of attention to educational matters and to initiate reforms and innovations of far-reaching importance. Auckland, in his minute of November 1939, had drawn attention to the importance of raising a trained body of teachers and the Committee had suggested a plan for the purpose. But nothing was done till 1847 when the Council's plan for a Normal School for training the future teachers was sanctioned and a school, which was also to act as a Normal School, was opened in Bow bazar in Calcutta but the school had to be closed within two years when it did not fulfil the expectations of the authorities mainly for want of funds. In 1814-45 the Council of Education drew the government's attention to the necessity of establishing a university with faculties of Arts, Law and Civil Engineering and on 25 October 1845 C.H. Cameron, the President of the Council of Education, decided that "the present advanced state of education in Bengal Presidency renders it not only expedient and advisable, but a matter of strict justice and necessity to confer upon the successful students some mark of distinction, by which they may be recognized as persons of liberal education and enlightened minds, capable of entering upon the active duties of life." A plan to establish aCentral University on the model of London University set1836, which would grant degrees in Arts, Science, Law, Medicine and Civil Engineering, and which would be "incorporated by a special Act of the Legislative Council of India and endowed with the privileges enjoyed by all Chartered Universities in Great Britain and Ireland" was forwarded in 1846 to the Government of Bengal with the request that royal assent should be profound for the scheme. *The Charter Act of 1833* "opened up" India to the missionary activity of other nations as well. It was in this year that the missionary activities of the non-English missionary societies began in India.

The German and the American missions were the most prominent among them. In 1834 the Basel Mission Society began its work at Mangalore followed by the Protestant Lutheran Missionary Society founded at Dresden in 1836 and the Women's Association of Education of Females in the Orient, founded in Berlin in 1842. Among the "well-manned and richly financed" American societies were the American Baptist Union, the American Board and the American Presbyterian Mission Board North. Among the most famous of the colleges which were established in rapid succession in various parts of India under the direct influence and inspiration of Duff were the one founded by Dr. John Wilson in Bombay in 1832 which later bore his name, the General Assembly's School in Madras founded by Anderson and Braidwood in 1837 (which later under Dr. Miller became the Christian College) and the Hislop College at Nagpur by Stephen Hislop in 1844. In 1841 Robert Noble founded the Noble College at Masulipatam and in 1853 the Church Missionary Society founded St. John's College at Agra. These colleges were in addition to those built by the Church of Scotland at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras[10].

Richter has described the quarter century, 1830-57, as "the age of the mission school." As he observes, "During the period the Government, in spite of the good intentions of Bentinck, lay really in an apathy, which we find it hard to understand; for three years. Lord Ellenborough was Governor General, a man who regarded the political ruin of the English power as the inevitable consequence of the education of the Hindus! Hence at that time the mission school exercised a dominating influence over Indian thought which it is difficult to estimate nowadays." The growth of missionary enterprise in education was greatly facilitated by the cordial relations that existed between the missionaries and the Company officials, among whom were many utilitarian's with an evangelical outlook. For example, Duff was a very close associate of Bentinck who encouraged him to establish the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta in 1830. Secondly, the apprehension that interference with the religious institutions of the Hindus and the Muslims would be greatly resented by them gradually began to disappear as the Company officials were often required to manage Hindu temples and Hindu religious fairs. The abolition of *sati* by Bentinck's Government in 1829 led to no revolt as the opponents of this reform had earlier pointed out and the Company officials became bolder than before in their support for missionary causes now that the East India Company had firmly established itself politically after outwitting the Indian powers and its European rivals. The missionary activities in education varied from province to province and were most remarkable in areas like Madras where the Company's initiatives in the field were negligible. By 1853 the missionary activity in education was almost equal to official enterprises which had 1,474 institutions with 67,569 pupils. If, however, the work of the Roman Catholic Mission were added to those of the Protestant organizations, missionary work in education certainly exceeded the official enterprise. The missionaries resented the Company schools which did not include the teaching of the Bible and were more popular with the Indians. They were therefore clamoring either for the inclusion of the Bible in the Company schools or for direct withdrawal of the Company from education, leaving the field entirely to missionaries. The Company would be indirectly involved through a system of grants-in-aid.

[8] M.L.Laid, *Missionaries and Education in Bengal*,1793-1805, Oxford press, London, 1972,p.170

[9] *Ibid*,p.201

[10] S.C.Ghosh, *Education Policy in India since Warren Hastings,* Cambidge Press, London, 1975, p.167.

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