



## EDUCATION AND EAST INDIA COMPANY

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Man is inquisitive by his natural instinct. A tendency of inquisitiveness about the environment is seen in a child since the time of he takes birth. After this, when he begins to understand things, there is more increase in his tendency of inquisitiveness. After that, the area of inquisitiveness regularly increases according to man's environment, circumstances, background and natural likes and dislikes. Together with it, desire to satisfy it also develops. Thus first the sense of inquiry rises in man, and then the desire to satisfy it also develops. Thus first the sense of inquiry rises in man and then the desire to satisfy it. The tradition of teacher and disciple and the order of obtaining education was the result of this tendency of inquiry as the first step of civilization. Man was successful to reach a certain level of knowledge through this and investigation became a current of his life's flow investigation or research based search. All the dimensions of knowledge which are visible today are the results of the research based search

It is not an easy to describe the nature of the British impact on Indian Society. An intercourse between the two societies leaves imprint on each other. The Indian Society – particularly that of Hindus society – had most assimilative force in it was more so because of the religious toleration and freedom of worship granted to each individual. This observation is not acceptable to all.<sup>1</sup>

The period that we are about to enter is a curious one. It is a time of conflict not only between France and England but between trade and politics for the first time on a major scale military and political events in Europe penetrate the lives of the Indian people in no uncertain manner: the future of men who knew nothing of the white man's world was to be subject to the



dynastic ambitions and political intrigues of the nations of Western Europe.<sup>2</sup> The wealth and splendour of India was not unknown to Europe long before the advent of the European Merchant Companies in the subcontinent.<sup>3</sup>

The year A.D. 1757 is tentatively regarded as the year at the beginning of the British rule in India, when Sirajuddula, the Nawab of Bengal was defeated by the British at the Battle of Plassey.<sup>4</sup>

The British conquest of India was neither sudden nor accidental. The East India Company acquired experience and knowledge of the political, social and economic conditions of India for a period of 150 years before they decided to complete for primacy. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the political situation in India was bound with European nations. The East India Company had no other European rival except the French in India. The decay of the Mughal power plunged India into anarchy and greatly facilitated the British conquest. Within a few years the English were able to enter the Persian trade. In 1622, the Portuguese were completely defeated in a sea fight.<sup>5</sup> The British Empire in India was built upon the wreckage of two Empires – the Mughals and the Marathas.<sup>6</sup>

The nature of the British conquest of India varies fundamentally from that of the Muslims. The Muslim invaders settled within the frontiers of India and made themselves part of India's life.<sup>7</sup> The English came to India after the Portuguese and the Dutch. The destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I opened up for England a new gate for overseas colonies.<sup>8</sup>

The foundation of The East India Company is a landmark in the history of the British Empire.<sup>9</sup> The Company was entitled, "**the Governor and Company of Merchant of London, trading into the East Indies**".<sup>10</sup> In 1591-2 James Lancaster reached the Indian Ocean and visited the Nicobars and the Island of Penang.<sup>11</sup> For nearly fifteen years after the Battle of Plassey the Company's servants indulged in a greedy scramble for wealth. They took bribes from Indians and cared more for their private trade than for that of the



Company. Warren Hastings an Oriental scholar became the Governor-General of Bengal. He laid the foundation of the British rule in India. Lord Cornwallis who succeeded him as the Governor-General from 1786-93 did his best to put an end to the corruption among the Company's officials. He established a distinction between the administrative and commercial functions of the Company. He organized a separate civil services to administer territory.<sup>12</sup> Seeing the other European countries prospering rapidly due to their trade companies in India, England also established a Company to trade with India in A.D. 1600.<sup>13</sup>

The bells which rang out the year 1600 rang in the first East India Company. It was incorporated, by a charter from Queen Elizabeth, under the name of the Governor and company of merchants of London trading into the East Indies". It was a very small beginning. A few English trader ironmongers, clotheirs, and other substantial people of that kind- headed by the Lord Mayor, a began to organize their system of management, and to adopt measures for the equipment of their fleets.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile while a charter of 31 Dec. 1600 incorporated the person who joined in the venture for Indian trade as "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into East Indies".<sup>15</sup> thus began the career of the English East India Company, the first ship of which sailed form England on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1601, "carrying letters of recommendation from the Queen to the sovereigns of the different parts to which it might the Elizabethan Age.<sup>17</sup>

In the later half of the eighteenth century, the English were the strongest power in the Indian water and needed only an accession to territory to launch them on an imperial career in India.<sup>18</sup> The East India House, the home of "the Grandest Society of Merchants in the Universe", was situated on the south side of the busy thoroughfare of leaden hall street in the city of London.<sup>19</sup>

The enormous profits made by the East India Company gave rise to a lot of jealousy in England, and many, persons began to margin it and to question its exclusive right to trade<sup>20</sup>.



The history of development British power in India falls into three periods *viz.*, (i) From the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to 1765 when the East India Company was a trading corporation existing on the sufferance of the Indian powers and in rivalry with other European trading Companies; (ii) From 1765 to 1858 the company acquired and consolidated its dominion and shared its sovereignty with the British Crown and gradually lost its mercantile privileges and powers; (iii) The third and the last period started from 1858 when the remaining powers of the East India Company were transferred to the crown<sup>21</sup>.

Englishmen stumbled upon Indian Empire in a 'Fit of absent mindedness'. The remark is true if it means that the British Empire in India was not the result of planned conquest, and if we believe that it grew up haphazardly out of the disordered condition of the country of which the English took fullest advantage. But they were never absent-minded with regard to what was happening around them.<sup>22</sup>

The East India Company became in effect a sovereign power on the mainland of India. The right of acquisition of revenue was followed by England's regular fight for supremacy in india<sup>23</sup>.

It is also unreasonable to suppose that it was only the Company's officers in India who wanted conquest and those in the home country did not wish it.<sup>24</sup> Between 1757 and 1784, the development of the East India Company from a predominantly commercial into a predominantly territorial power undermined the stability of its Home Government. The Indian house became a synonym for corruption and faction. Contemporary statemen anticipated the danger of a great Empire being created and ruled by Britons independent of the authority of the British Cabinet. The almost complete failure of Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773, and the Reports the Select and Secret Committees of 1781, necessitated the reconsideration and adoption by Parliament of a new system for both the home and Indian governments of the Company. Ministers meddled and the company muddled but it was not until the North-Fox coalition



that a determined attempt was made to reorganize the Company's system of government.<sup>25</sup>

By 1857 East India Company was in complete control of India, ruling about three-fifth of the country directly and remaining two-fifth indirectly through subservient Indian Princes. The cumulative effect of Dalhousie's administration was the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 which are nationalist call the first war of Indian independence.<sup>26</sup> When the East India Company established a factory at Hugli in 1851, it marked the beginning of British ascendancy in Bengal.<sup>27</sup> Thus by 1856, the British completed their conquest of India's not only this, they attempted to extend their empire beyond the frontiers of India<sup>28</sup>. The weakness in the constitution of the English East India Company made felt the outset.<sup>29</sup>

But because of Dupleix, there was nearly a French Empire in India, and certainly because of him there was a English one.<sup>30</sup> In spite to all the human weakness, there is no doubt that Clive rendered signal services to the British Empire.<sup>31</sup>

By 1772, the financial state of the East India Company was such that falling to extract a loan Bank of England, it approached the government with a request for a million pounds<sup>32</sup>. As a result of the creation of the new company a bitter struggle started between the two companies which proved quite ruinous. Ultimately a compromise was arrived at between the two companies in 1702 and they were amalgamated.<sup>33</sup>

The united company continued to look after the affairs of India became sovereign ruler of India<sup>34</sup>. No doubt, the French rivalry was a great hurdle in their way of smooth working, however, the English succeeded in establishing their way over Bengal and in eliminating the French rivalry. The English established themselves firmly in India by the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. Now they were having no rivals to contest.<sup>35</sup> At Madras, in 1670, the first school had been established for the education of the children of the Portuguese, British and



Eurasians and arrangement was made for education of English by levying a cess<sup>36</sup>.

## **2. BACKGROUND OF COLONICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA DURING LATER MEDIEVAL PERIOD**

The Turko-afghan conquerors of northern India brought with them not only a new religion but also their own system of education to regulate the intellectual and cultural life of the people, and they enforced it on their subject. The Hindus had a mature and highly advanced system of education which constituted the backbone of the ancient Indian Culture.<sup>37</sup> The Department however, exercised considerable influence upon education. In all Muslim countries education was not controlled by the state and any person who was qualified and felt the urge could set himself up as a teacher. The jurists have laid it down that the Muhtasib should not permit ill-qualified or disreputable persons to act as teachers.<sup>38</sup>

The primary schools, called pathshalas, were usually attached to or housed in the premises of the Brahmanic or Jain temples. Either the priests themselves acted as teachers or appointed Pandits or Jain scholars to impart education to the minor children of the locality free of charge<sup>39</sup>. Mughal Empire may not be called like modern well wishing empires. So to educate the people was not considered the main duty of the State. Perhaps no king except Babur and Akbar made arrangements for education. Generally no expenses were made by the state for the expansion of the education. The field of woman education was limited. At that time, temples and mosques would work as schools.<sup>40</sup>

The great Mughal Emperors were patrons of learning and promoters of education. Their example was followed by the Mughal nobility and upper classes. Consequently, education progressed well under the Mughals.<sup>41</sup> Like his predecessors Akbar and Jahangir, Shah Jahan was a great patron of learning and literature. The liberal educational policy adopted by Akbar for the intellectual and cultural advancement of his subjects remained in full force till



the end of Shah Jahan's reign<sup>42</sup>. All the Mughal rulers were scholars and lovers of literature and arts. They had keen interest in education. Mostly the Maktabas (schools) and Madarsas (colleges) of the Muslims and the Pathshalas and Vidyapiths of the Hindus were managed by private management but the contribution of the Mughal emperors was also significant in the progress and development of these schools and colleges as they were themselves interested in it.<sup>43</sup>

The department of Religious Affairs provided grants for the maintenance of such institutions if an endowment did not exist already for the purpose. Grants were not made exclusively to Muslim institutions and scholars. A large number of Hindu temples, priests and scholars were recipients of such grants.<sup>44</sup> The Mughal government did not consider it to be its duty to educate the people. It had no department of education and did not allocate a portion of the public revenue for the spread of literacy<sup>45</sup>.

In the Mughal Courts, learned persons even from foreign countries were entertained, encouraged and rewarded. Some good libraries were also opened. Literacy and philosophical debates and discussion used to be organized and the emperors also participated in the same. Learned persons were encouraged to write original books and translate great works from other languages. Surdas, Tulsidas, Keshav Das, Rahim, Faizi, Abul Fazi have been the immortal poets and writers of this period.<sup>46</sup> Education was a private concern, a handmaid of religion among the Mahammedans as well as the Hindus. The duty of the State to educate its future citizens were not recognized by the Mughal State and naturally there was no separate department of education.<sup>47</sup> The Mughal did not attempt to establish a uniform and planned system of education and no separate department existed for this purpose. The educational institutions were mostly managed by private enterprises. While the Muslims had their Maktabas (Schools) and Madrsas (Colleges) the Hindus had their Pathshalas and Vidyapiths. Yet the Mughal emperors did not neglect education.<sup>48</sup>



The important thing was that though there were separate schools for Hindu and Muslim students, yet they could get the education going in any school. It can not be said that in Mughal period, education was backward. The aim of education was to reveal the hidden plans of the students and to discipline them<sup>49</sup>. Education made rapid strides under the continued patronage of the state. Apart from the patronage extended to formal education, the Mughal emperors paid large sums of money to men who devoted themselves to literature or poetry.<sup>50</sup> Education was thus in Mughal India a private affair, a hand-maid of religion, and if the Mughals took interest in it, it was to earn religious merit and not to advance the welfare of people. The public made their own arrangements for the education of their children, and considering the age and circumstances of the time, the arrangements were fairly satisfactory.<sup>51</sup>

In the beginning the British government did not pay any attention to the development of education in India. By the year AD 1813 the Government did not feel like having any responsibilities for the education of the Indian people.<sup>52</sup> No attention was paid towards the education of the common people. The first Mughal emperor, Babur, was a scholar. He established a Madarsa in Delhi. His son, Humayun, also established a Madarasa in Delhi. Akbar however, realized that to concentrate mostly on the study of religion and Muslim theology was harmful to the cause of education. Therefore, he established Maktabas and Madaras in large numbers and gave financial assistance to Hindu Pathshalas and Vidyapiths. Jahangir was also liberal in providing financial assistance to educational institutions of both Hindus and the Muslims. Shah Jahan encouraged learning by granting rewards. He made generous contributions towards education. Therefore, the number of educational institutions grew up during the reign of Shah Jahan as well. Aurangzeb gave all encouragement to the education of the Muslims but tried to close down all of them, yet, it is certain that the education of the Hindus suffered during his rule. The Later Mughals failed to pay proper attention towards education because of their financial difficulties.<sup>53</sup> The aim at education





during the period was the extension of knowledge and the propagation of Islamic principles, laws and social conventions. Education was based on religion. Its aim was to make persons religious-minded. The Muslims education also aimed at the achievement of material prosperity.<sup>54</sup> Individuals also set up educational institutions, such as, the college of Maham Anaga and Madarsah of Khwaja Mulin in Delhi, the Madarsahs of Maulana. Sadruddin in Shahahanabad, and the Madrsaha of Akramud-din, Abdul Hakim and Rafi-ud-din in the regin of Aurangazeb and the Madarsah of Ghazi-ud-din, in Delhi founded amidst the waning glories of the Mughal empire.<sup>55</sup> There were no separate educational institutions for girls. They had to go to boys' schools if they at all wished to get education. Hindu kings and nobles paid attention to the education of their women but the education of Muslim women remained almost neglected. Strict Purdah System proved to be the greatest hurdle in the way of their education but the royal Muslim Ladies were imparted education.<sup>56</sup> Private schools existed in almost every village and a school was almost invariably attached to every temple or mosque. The Hindus introduced their children to regular education at the age of about five. The Muslim usually performed the Maktab ceremony of their children at the age of four years, four months and four days. Muslims was indifferent towards the education of his sons. Maktab were primary schools meant for the beginners.<sup>57</sup> They imparted fundamentally religious education and were generally attached to temples or mosques. The teachers got no regular salary and subsisted on the meagre gift of the village folk. Classes were held in the premises of the mosques or temple usually under a tree. The aim was just to make the students literate and perhaps teach some elementary arithmetic. Corporal punishments was rigorously inflicted, and the teacher was a terror for his pupils.<sup>58</sup> The Hindus received their education in Pathsalas and Vidyapiths. Several scholars provided education to students at their homes also. Sanskrit language and literature were the main subjects of study. The Hindus emphasized religious education less as compared to the Muslim. Therefore, the study of other subjects was more popular to them.



Benaras, Mathura, Allahabad, Nadia, Mithila, Ayodhya, Srinagar etc. were important educational centres for the Hindus. Berrier compared Benaras with Athenes of Greece for the purpose of education. Tavarnier also praised Benaras for being the centre of high learning.<sup>59</sup> The Muslim system of education, like its Hindu counterpart, was religious in nature; its primary object was to propagate Islam and 'spread the light of learning among the faithful.'<sup>60</sup> The Muslim seats of learning too were many. The Mughal emperor established school at Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur-Sikri and Lahore Muslim scholars and theologians opened schools in big cities.<sup>61</sup> The Maktab, like the Pathshalas of the Hindus, were usually attached to Masjids and Shrines. A mulla or maulavi, in charge of a Masjids, however small in each Muslim locality or mohallas would run a single-teacher Maktab within the premises of the masjid itself; sometimes he might, like a brahman teachers, hold the classes in his own house. A wealthy child might receive elementary lessons to education from a tutor at his parental house, the practice of appointing ataliqs or tutors for imparting education to the children of nobility and the princes were common; these tutors were paid handsomely by their patrons.<sup>62</sup>

In 'Maktab' children were made to remember the 'Ayats' of 'Quran'. They were also imparted the education of reading, writing and primary arithmetic. When the children had learnt the Arabic script, they were given the education in Persian language and script. The stories of Prophets and Muslim 'Fakirs' were also told to the children. Children were imparted the knowledge of art of writing letters and conversation.<sup>63</sup> The term 'Maktab' is derived from Arabic 'Kutub' and means a place where writing is taught. These Maktab were attached to mosques. The Maktab was the chief place where primary education was imparted to children.<sup>64</sup> There is evidence to show that some Muslim students attended Hindu schools for instruction in astronomy, astrology, mathematics and medicine. From the time of Akbar onward Hindus attended Muslim institutions to learn Persian. No degrees or diplomas were usually awarded, and a student's ability and scholarship were usually judged by



the reputation of one's teachers or the institutions where he was educated.<sup>65</sup> After completing the primary education, the children were sent to 'Madaras' to receive higher education. Hence, there were separate teachers for different subjects. Special emphasis was given to the education of religious as well as secular subjects. The religious education included the study of 'Quran', Mohammad Saheb and his preachings, Islamic Laws and Islamic history etc. The secular education included the study of Arabic literature, grammar, history, philosophy, mathematics, geography, politics, economics, Greek language, astrology and agriculture etc.<sup>66</sup>

For higher education there were the tols and the Madrasas, the former for the learning of Sanskrit and the later for Arabic and Persian. Ruling chieftains, landlords, and wealthy and charitable persons generally patronized such institutions. But in general, their condition was bad during the period under consideration. The local powers were fighting among themselves and falling prey to the foreign invaders, and the wealthier individuals were passing through vicissitudes of fortune during the second half of the eighteenth century and, consequently, the higher institutions of learning suffered from a dearth of patrons. Nevertheless, they lingered on.<sup>67</sup> Both boys and girls studied in the same institutions and under same pattern of education. The Hindus paid more attention to the education of girls as compared to the Muslims. However, mostly girls did not receive higher education. Only rich people arranged for higher education for the girls of their families and that was arranged mostly at home.<sup>68</sup>

Although there was 'Pardah' system during the Muslim period, yet Islam did not oppose the education of women. These two contrary factors influenced the education of women in two ways. The girls were entitled to receive education equal to that at the boys up to a definite age but thereafter their education was stopped.<sup>69</sup> Female education during the Mughal period was confined to princesses and upper class women. There were no schools for girls but well-to-do people employed tutors for the education of their daughters.



Educated women were given high position in society and exercised great influence at home.<sup>70</sup> Thus, it is evident that the Mughal System of education was quite satisfactory. Educational institutions and scholars were patronized by royal persons and nobles of the empire. But there were some serious defects in the educational system. The Mughal emperors paid no attention towards the education of women, technical education and professional education. Moreover no attention was paid by the imperial authorities towards the educational of the general masses.<sup>71</sup>

Medival education could not develop the power of observation and argue. One main defect was also that the students of that period did not have ability of pure and practical decision. It was much rigid, lifeless and bookish.<sup>72</sup> The Mughal system of education was satisfactory from certain points of view. Education and scholars were patronised and financed by emperors and nobles, the upper classes had all facilities for education.<sup>73</sup> the character of education was medival. Learning was confined to scriptures, mythology and religious laws. The deeper philosophies of Hindusim and Islam were attainable by a few, but for the vast majority of scholars, learning was embodied in dogma. Memory rather than understanding, revision of lessons rather than inquisitive penetration into the subject, remained the scholar's supreme task. As a result, higher education only served an outmoded purpose. In the circumstances, Indian education awaited, as it were, new directions from the changing West of the age of elightment.<sup>74</sup> However, most of the Mughals emperors were educated, so scholars got royal protection. So, all literatures Persian, Hindi, Turkey, Punjabi were developed. The Persian literature was developed till reigns of Babar, Akbar and his successors at least till the reign of Mohammad Shah.<sup>75</sup> Yet, we can say that there were facilities of education during the rule of Mughals except in the eighteenth century. That is why we find fairly satisfactory progress in the field of literature and fine arts during this period. The only serious defect of this educational system was that there was no adequate arrangement for technical and scientific education which resulted in



backwardness of the country as compared to other countries particularly those of Europe.<sup>76</sup> When English people dominated over India, they did not pay any attention towards Indian education. The Pathsalas and Maqtabas gradually came to an end due to shortage of money. The present system of education is completely the result of English government. The medium of education and this period was English and the study of all subjects of knowledge and science was started.<sup>77</sup>

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