

# The Role of Education to Uplift the Society (1849-1900)

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## Abstract..

In 1849AD, the British rule was established in Punjab. With the advent of the English, the western education system started. Before the arrival of the English, the education was imparted in temples, mosques and the *Gurudwaras*. The modern scientific education like today was not given there. They imparted only the religious education. But with the advent of the English, the western education system came to Punjab. The greatest contribution for spread of western education system was by the Christian missionaries because they wanted to spread Christian religion through education. The Christian missionaries opened a number of schools and colleges with the help of the British Government. But to organize the education system in a proper way, the British Government prepared a plan which is called the Wood's Dispatch. The Wood's Dispatch established the present school, college and the university structure in Punjab. After this, the Hunter Commission in 1882AD stressed upon the education policy prepared by the Wood's Dispatch. Under the impact of the British Government and the Christian missionaries, the social movements also made contributions in encouraging the education system. With this, the schools, colleges and the universities came into existence in Punjab.

## Index Terms

In the early days, the style of education was similar worldwide. The present schools and colleges found their existence in India after the augment of the Europeans in India. These were not old enough in Europe too. Just like in our country, the big universities of Europe were nothing else but the classrooms of religious pioneers. The style of education in Europe changed vigorously as compared to that in India, thanks to fast growth in the field of Science and technology.

Before the arrival of Muslims, antique Hindu Brahmins, Jains and Budh pioneers used to give education to the students at their respective homes. The number of students used to be very less. Hence, teachers had no particular prefixed time to start teaching the students. The time when the students used to get mature, self dependent and capable enough to serve the teacher, their parents used to give them a small token of money and send them to the teacher to get the education. In those days, students used to stay with their teacher throughout their

period of study. After the completion of the curriculum, they used to return to their homes. Time changed and so did the protocols and practices. The days came when the students, whose house was nearby to that of the teacher, used to return to their respective homes after a daily study cycle. Next day, early morning, students used to again visit the teacher to get the education. The circle continued till the completion of whole study period. There was no fix time to go for the classes and to return. Children used to go to the teacher at dawn and return after dusk. There were no protocols or rules regarding the classes.

With the passage of time, the style of education saw various changes. Instead of the ancient teachers and their schools, Brahmins started teaching in temples and guest houses of the towns. Kings donated large number of lands in the names of education temples. Many donors used to donate money for those causes. They not only helped in the construction of temples or guest houses, but also made arrangements of the food for the teachers as well as the students. Hence, thanks to those continuous efforts, the spread of education saw an exponential hike. Slowly and steadily, these religious and educational institutes became book warehouses where not only quality education was given but books regarding various subjects were stored to provide quick and quality education to the students. On the arrival of Muslims, putting foot on the same paddle, the same policies and practices were adopted by Muslims too. Just like Hindu temples, the Muslims tombs became a sight of education where religious preachers of Muslim community started contributing in the demanding field of education. They used innovative and crafty methods of teaching. They used to teach the students in interesting ways. The style of education just matched to that of the Hindus. It was just that the place of Hindu bhajans, Vedic chants and religious songs was taken by the religious book of Muslims i.e. Quran Sharif. Along with this, students were also taught History, Mathematics, Land measurements etc.

When a student used to go for studying, he used to get a chance to sit to attain the knowledge after the prayers of “Jumma” on Friday. The Muslim preacher, commonly called “maulavi”, was given pieces of jiggery, a cloth measuring two and a half meters to three meters, four to five cent money. This used to fluctuate as per the capability of the student and as per the faith of the student. There was no fixed income of the religious teacher. His income used was of a fluctuating nature. His only source of income was the land records in the name of Muslim monuments. Along with this, the gifts from the students also served as a source of income for him. So, these two were the main sources of income for the Muslim teachers i.e. the land records and the gifts. Sanskrit used to be taught at the Hindu classrooms while Farsi and Urdu were taught at Mosques. Similarly, Panjabi was taught at Sikh *Gurudwaras* and guest houses. In cities, Panjabi was taught by the married teachers while in the villages, it was

taught by the indifferent saints who used to pray at dawn and dusk at the *Gurudwaras*. Hence, there was a different approach in teaching Panjabi in urban and rural areas. It varied according to the scenarios and the requirements at different places. The teachers of the *Gurudwaras* used to spread the religious teachings at dusk by narrating them and singing them. They used to teach the students during day time. Their basic approach of teaching too matched very closely to those of the Hindus and Muslims. It was much alike to that of Hindus and Muslims. In the early days, students were taught how to write on soil or the ash. The soil or the ash used to be spread on the ground and hence, writing work would be done on it. Then it transformed into the wooden plates. They didn't face any difficulties, thanks to the mother tongue being Panjabi. Children used to study "Panj *Granthi*, Baai Waara, Bhagat Bani and Das *Granthi*", and finally, children used to study the Guru Granth Sahib. Villages had no privileges of having Brahmini classrooms of Sanskrit language. This used to be in cities only. Hence, both Hindus and Sikhs used to study the *Gurumukhi* script only.

When the English came to India, the policies and protocols of education were traditional and old fashioned. The western education found its feet in India in the eighteenth century. This system of education made a deep impact on the people of Punjab, owing to the reason that this language had an impact on newly ruling power. During the early days of their reign, the British wanted to keep Punjabis away from the western style of education. This was because it had an impact on the royal ruling era. If people got into the system of western system of education, they would get aware on high notes that would create a threat to the British rule in India. Along with the British, even Christian pioneers had come to Punjab. They started the task of giving modern education to the people. They opposed to the policy of the British of keeping the common people away from that style of education because they wanted to promote Christianity under the shield of modern education. Gradually, even British got agreed to the policy of the Christian promoters. They ultimately realized that by the promotion of the western language in India, the British rule would get strengthened. Christian promoters started missionary schools in order to promote modern education. The first such school was opened at Misla near Kotgarh in 1843 AD. Then, a school was started in Jalandhar by American mission in 1848. District level schools were opened between 1851 and 1854 in Rawalpindi, Gujarat, Shahpur, Multan, Jehlam and Jalandhar.

Till the halfway of nineteenth century, education had found deep roots in the cities and towns. British Government wanted to organize the education in the country. Till then, English had been adopted as a medium of education. Schools and colleges had been set up. But due to absence of healthy training programs for the teachers, there was scarcity of quality teachers. Hence, to overcome these banes in the system, British parliament set up a committee under Sir

Charles Wood, who crafted an innovative plan to evacuate these shortcomings in the system. This is known as “*Wood’s Dispatch*”. In this, details about the educational system in British India were given. The responsibility of giving quality education to the people of India was also mentioned in it. In this dispatch, main suggestions were also given. For example, Boost should be given for the upliftment of Indian languages along with British English. Boost should be given to open private institutions and also, grants should be given to such institutions by the Government. The head of such institutes should be a director. The director should be helped by the inspector and sub inspector. Universities should be set up in big cities. In those universities, intermediate and degree colleges were to be set up. Along with these, high schools, agro vernacular schools, middle schools and primary schools were to be included. To increase the diameter of education, normal schools were proposed to be set up for conducting the training of the teachers. Education to women found a special place in Wood’s Dispatch. Many facilities for women education were discussed in this dispatch. Good books for the children should be written and hence published. Proposals were made to give bonus to deserving students.

These proposals given in the Wood’s Dispatch were adopted by the Government and implemented in Punjab. Education department was set up for the first time in Punjab in 1856 AD. A director was given the charge of this department. T. W. Arnold was made the first director of this department. After 1854, the education field gained high accelerations and in no time, the number of schools rose to as high as one hundred and twenty eight. Out of these, one hundred and twenty eight schools, twenty four were district level schools, a hundred were tehsil level schools and four were normal schools for the training purpose of the teachers for the enhancement and sharpening their teaching skills. To cope up with the cost of education, a tax of one percent was imposed on the land. The sum hence obtained from these taxes was supposed to be spent on the rural level schools, but gradually this amount was spent on all the schools irrespective of their localities.

The first school for the education of girls was opened in Rawalpindi in the year 1856 AD. But the main attention on the number of such schools was paid after 1862 AD only. “Anjuman-E-Punjab” was set up in 1865 by the everlasting and tireless efforts of Dr. Leitner. The first law schools under it was opened in Lahore in 1868 AD. The Lahore University was set up in 1869 AD. Lahore University was renamed Punjab University in 1882 AD. Mahindra College was set up in 1872 AD which was associated to Calcutta University. It reached up to the level of degree by the year 1887 AD. The education department had to face challenges before 1870 AD due to shortage of funds. But due to the efforts of Lord Mayo, the finance for the education system was provided in adequate amount and hence, the shortcomings in the

field of education with point of financial crises were eradicated with ease. Hence, the primary schools saw a great boost in their numbers. Yet, there was scarcity for the institutes that taught higher education.

During this time, societies for the training of the teachers and other technical glitches were started. Good examples of such societies are Mayo School of Industrial Art set up in 1875AD and Central Training College set up in 1881. Lord Ripon set up a twenty two member committee in 1882 AD regarding education. William Hunter was the *Chairman* of this commission. There was a main motive behind this commission. It was observed that the Government was not working according to the Act of 1854 AD. This act was not wholly implemented in Bombay and Punjab. This commission gave few excellent suggestions in its report. For example, an exponential boost should be given to private institutions. Stress should be made to set up such institutes. Also, emphases were made to provide grants to these institutions so that they may resist the shortcomings of financial crises and may show a long lasting effect. It was also suggested that primary schools should be set up in large numbers. Municipal committees and district boards were proposed to handle these schools. Gradually, all primary schools should be handled by private authorities. To help these agencies, Government aids should be given. They emphasized and paid special attention on the education of the Muslims. Children should be taught basic principles and human responsibilities as a social animal. Special efforts should be made to emphasize on improvement of physical education. Commission gave suggestions for commercial education, libraries, religious books and bonuses and grants. The recommendations of this commission have a special place in the history of Indian education. Just like Wood's Dispatch of 1854 AD, this commission is regarded as a high weightage stone because most of its suggestions were accepted by Governor General in the Council of 1884 AD.

It was due to the suggestions of this commission that the education field saw growth in various aspects. The year 1882 AD is important in aspects of education in Punjab. It was in this year that Punjab University, Lahore was established. This University was established during the era of Viceroy Lord Ripon and Lieutenant Governor Charles. Both these officers made great efforts for the Indian education. With the establishment of this University, Punjab escaped from the hurdles that would have come in the path of Punjab in the field of education.

In 1882 AD, as per the reports of Hunter Commission, a provisional committee was made in Punjab. This committee made a great impact in the education system of Punjab. The universe saw a vigorous change in the field of education in the land of five rivers. Due to this, in the coming days, education saw a great upliftment for primary, secondary and higher education. Not only this, adding cherry to the cake, education of girl child saw an exponential

hike due to the tireless efforts of these. During this era, the number of Government and private schools increased in number. In 1886 AD, agricultural schools were opened. In these schools, the children of the farmers could take the education. The schools were closed during the harvest season. During the initial days, these schools ran well. But with time, these schools were closed permanently as it was seen that there was no need of such schools. In 1890 AD, the number of such schools was one hundred and eighty seven and a total of students five hundred and sixty two students passed out through these schools. The secondary education saw a great growth in those days. The number of secondary schools in Punjab in 1900 was three hundred and seventy two. The main goal of these schools was to give education to students in English language.

The social improvement movements too played a vital role in the development of education. When British annexed India in 1849AD, they promoted local formula of education to make Indian people happy. But the famous social activist, Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed the policy of promoting local education system. He demanded education system that was influenced by British system. By this, the social and political upliftment of people was expected. But the British wanted Indians to be bounded in the system of local education so that they did not rise up against the British in coming days. They wanted to keep Indians like a frog trapped in the well that was unaware of the rapid growth and changing systems outside the well. But it was due to the Christian missionaries that the foreign language found its feet in India. Very soon, the British too agreed to the policy of Christian missionaries because in the Christian missionaries, along with the education, promotion of Christian religion was done.

But the social activists objected to that education policy of Christian missionaries. They started saying ill about those Christian missionaries. Hence, a kind of enlightenment took place in the religions like Hinduism, Muslim and Sikhism. Till that time, the trap of the missionary schools set up by the Christians with the help of British had been set up in Punjab. Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims started converting their religion into Christianity in masses. Various social activists started making people aware of such ill acts in order to maintain their existence. Hence, various social activist movements were born in Punjab. Some healthy examples of such movements are Arya Samaj, Dev Samaj and Chief Deewan Khalsa.

The pioneers of the social development moments knew that in order to achieve success, the awareness of common people needed to be there. This awareness could be brought to the people by the means of education only. Hence, movements like Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha and Anjuman E Himayat made a great contribution in the field of education in making the people aware about the stats and the facts. Namdhari movement hardly took any interest in that.

Seeing the social improvement movements raising their heads in Punjab, even Christian missionaries raised their pace of work. Missionary schools were opened at rapid pace. Some examples of these are Farman Christian College Lahore in 1886, Scott Mission College Sialkot in 1892, Gordon Mission College, Lahore in 1892, Gordon Mission College Rawalpindi in 1893, Church Mission College Amritsar in 1900, Edward College Peshawar in 1900, Mission College Lahore (1866-69), Saint Stephen's College Delhi in 1881, Forman Christian College Lahore, Mission College in 1889 was replaced by Church of Scotland High School Sialkot in 1886, Inter College 1889 and Degree college 1900 AD were opened.

Missionary educational system also influenced the Punjabi social improvements on a great deal. The Punjabi movements thought of adopting the similar policies to promote their own religion. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims adopted this policy to promote the respective cultures and education. This was done mainly to save the Punjabi culture from the western culture. They thought that if missionaries were promoting their religion, they too could do the same to oppose the work of the missionaries. The social improvement activists started opening schools in the names of their own religions. In no time, various schools were opened to oppose the ill aims of the missionaries. The examples of such institutions are DAV School in 1886, DAV College Lahore in 1888, Khalsa College Amritsar in 1892, Islamia College Lahore in 1892. These institutes did not oppose the western education system. They rather opposed the system of Christian missionaries that promoted their religion in the name of education. They wanted to gain all possible help from the British Government. They favored this. Hence, they all demanded financial help from the British Government to run the schools of the respective religions. This demand was just matching the demand that Christian missionaries were making. For the matter of fact, the Christian missionaries were already getting the help from the British Government. Demand was made to the Hunter commission that the education by the means of Bible should not be made compulsory for the non Christian students. British, in no time, agreed to this demand. Hence, the local education became a main part of the education system.

To boost this system of education in Punjab, various institutes were set up. Some of these were Dyal Singh College, Lahore, Sanatan Dharam College, Lahore and Khalsa College, Gujranwala.

In 1899 AD, Oxford University and in 1896 AD, Cambridge University gave affiliation to Panjab University. Normal schools were established at Jalandhar, Rawalpindi and Multan. Industrial schools were opened in Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Kasur. Every type of quality education was given under it. Panjab University got affiliation for law and medical degrees in 1891 AD.

In the same way, social improvement movements and Singh Sabha movements made a great role in the field of female education. These societies played a vital role in the improvement of quality of female education in Punjab. The pioneer of the Singh Sabha, Baba Khem Singh Bedi was the first person who opened Gurmukhi classes for girls in Punjab. These classes were opened in Rawalpindi, Pothehar, Jehlam and Gujarat In 1876 AD. The number of Gurmukhi schools was forty in 1876AD. By 1879, the number of Gurmukhi schools was increased up to forty two.

During the period of Baba Khem Singh, when the preparations were going on to open the Khalsa College in 1891 AD, it was then that Bhai Takhat Singh Ferozपुरi and Professor Bhai Gurmukh Singh got impressed by Khalsa Deewan Lahore and became his helping hands. They established Sikh girl classrooms for girls in Ferozपुर. It adopted the name of “Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalya” in few years.

British Government too made tireless efforts to promote girl education. These efforts soon showed positive vibes in the coming days. They boosted the female education in Punjab with the help of Christian missionaries and Social activists. Vernacular schools were opened to promote Vernacular education among females in 1865-66. This was a good step to promote female education. In 1883 AD, Mrs. Steel was given the powers to check and organize the schools for girls. This was a great step by the British. It played a vital role in the upliftment of women of Punjab. It also helped them to come out of their houses and show the hidden talents in them. This also boosted the confidence of women. Ms. Waunten and Mrs. Rodgers were given the powers in education department to check and arrange the requirements in Delhi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Jehlam and Ludhiana in 1885 AD. This boosted the level of women education even higher. This helped in social upliftment of the female. In 1868, Ms. F A Francis was appointed to check the improvements in the field of female education. She had a deep knowledge of local languages of Punjab. This accounted for the reason of her appointment for the above mentioned task. The local language education medium played a vital role in fast growth rate of women education in Punjab. To get teachers trained for the education of women, normal schools were opened. One such school was Alexendra School, The Christianity Boarding school, The Municipal Boarding School and Church of Zanana mission, Amritsar were started in 1892 AD. At the same phase of time, by the efforts of Ms. Brown medical schools were opened for Christian women in Ludhiana in 1894. They got the name of Christian medical colleges in the coming days.

The social religious societies and social activists made efforts to improve the level of female education. Medical college, Lahore was made a center of education for women. Swami Dayanand made endless efforts to improve the social and financial condition of women. His

efforts were rewarded sooner or later. In 1890 AD, Jalandhar societies boosted girl education. Nine schools and two colleges were started from 1886 AD. Arya Samaj opened Arya Putri Pathshala, Abohar, Arya Girl Middle School, Moga, Saint Das A S Girls High school, Jalandhar and Shri Banwari Lal Vedic Kanya Pathshala. Lala Munshi Ram and Lala Dev Raj established Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jalandhar. This was a golden period of women education. It saw a great rise in the quantity and quality of institutes for women. To improve the quality of education of women, British Government, Christian Missionaries, Singh Sabha, Arya Samaj, etc made great contributions. Hence, there was a great level improvement in the financial and social condition of women.

Hence, in these ways, the condition of the education of women saw a great level of improvement and change. It was due to education that the mindset of people changed. The quality and the level of thinking rose. Hence, they started making the efforts to evacuate social evils. Along with this, people started inventing new things by making the use of education. It was because of the education that women started getting respect in the society. Also, the evils regarding the women harassment were removed from the society. Hence, education played a vital role in upliftment of condition of women. After British annexed Punjab, they started the policy of equal treatment for all. Hence, the religious and caste barriers were eradicated from the society. This was very important for the growth of the nation. Punjab got the adequate environment to standardize the social and cultural environment. People started seeing the evils of society with realistic eyes and hatred. It was due to the education that the educated part of society in Punjab came forward and started establishing societies like press, Indian opinion. They also made people aware regarding the social evils. Thus, improvement in the society was seen. The part of Punjab that was lagging behind in various aspects, came forward and started to modify.

Hence, we can say that Punjab saw a great rise in development after being added up in the British Empire in 1849AD. Before the arrival of British, the education was given in temples, mosques and *Gurudwaras*. There was no source of scientific education like modern day education. Also, the people did not go away from their respective religious place to attain knowledge. The Wood's letter in 1854 AD made it possible to have a primary school, secondary school, college and University system of education. This style of education still exists in Punjab. In the same year, education departments were set up in Punjab under Director of Education. Panjab University was established in 1882 AD. Hunter Commission was set up in 1882 AD that played a crucial role in the upliftment of education in Punjab. It was highly beneficial for the people of Punjab, though British had done this for their selfishness. British did not want to spend much on education as they were in a foreign land. They just wanted to

produce well educated clerks that would do work just for them. Also, there was marginal development in the education of women. It was the efforts of British that lead to the upliftment of society in the field of education. The social activists played a great role in this. It was the result of all these that people were made aware about what was happening around, good or bad.

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