



BEYOND MACAULAY

EDUCATION IN INDIA, 1780–1860

SECOND EDITION

Parimala V. Rao



BEYOND MACAULAY

Beyond Macaulay provides a radical and comprehensive history of Indian education in the early colonial era from 1780 to 1860. It critically explores data of 16,000 indigenous schools, which shows that indigenous education was not oral, informal, and Brahmin-centric but written, formal, and egalitarian. Based on rich archival evidence, the book challenges the conventional theory that the British administration imposed the English language and modern education on Indians. By including hitherto unused 41 Educational Minutes of Macaulay, the volume examines his educational ideas, his insistence on compulsory teaching of Indian languages in English schools, his encouragement of the Hindi language, his opposition to making Arabic as a medium of instruction in medical and technical education it opens up hitherto unknown perspectives on Orientalist–Modernist debates. Contrasting the educational ideas of the British elites and the Orientalists with dissenting Scottish voices, it shows that the colonial administration was not monolithic. The book discusses post-Macaulayan educational policies, closing down of Macaulay’s schools, and the Wood’s Despatch of 1854, as well as how people protected English schools during the Revolt of 1857.

This second edition is supplemented with complete student essays which reveal the students’ use of the English language, classical imageries, the debates in Europe, and finally, their own location in Indian society. The essays by upper caste, OBC, and Dalit students demonstrate their extraordinary competency and command over the English language. The book will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of education, history of education, Indian history, the history of English language teaching in India, sociology, and political science.

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Second Edition

Parimala V. Rao

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To
*The Indian teachers and students who struggled so hard
to teach and learn English and modern subjects
in spite of the British rule,*
And
*to the defiance of Scotsmen in India
who defended Indians, and
helped them to acquire the English language
and challenge the colonial administration.*



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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

Bringing in the Voices of Students

During the course of the last four years, the scholars who read this book or heard my presentations made two important suggestions: they wanted me to add a chapter on Macaulay's ideas on social justice and include complete essays of students that I had quoted in this book. I have taken up the latter suggestion for this volume.

In both government and private English and vernacular in schools and colleges, essay writing was taught as a part of the evaluation process. The essay competitions were also held regularly. The essays included in this volume belong to the former category. In Bengal, English and Bengali essays were judged separately, whereas in the Bombay Presidency, the officials insisted that students write on a single topic in both English and vernacular and their merit was judged on one's ability to express in both languages.¹ The copies of English essays written by the students of Vidyalaya or the Hindu College during the 1820s and 1830s formed part of the report of the government of India sent to the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London. The quality of the answers of the students of the Vidyalaya in the examination was regarded as a benchmark for the quality of higher education across India.²

We have the original prize-winning essays of the Delhi, Agra, and Banaras Colleges for the period 1835–1838; because T.B. Macaulay wanted to see them, they were sent to the education department – General Committee of Public Instruction (GCPI) at Calcutta.³ After the departure of Macaulay in January 1838, and particularly after the creation of a separate education department for the North Western Province in 1842, the essays and the examination results were not sent to Calcutta. They were lost to posterity as all documents of Delhi and Agra Colleges were destroyed during the Revolt of 1857.⁴ In the Bombay Presidency, the Elphinstone College was established in 1835, which was closed down and converted into a vernacular primary school and a teacher training institution by the acting governor James Farish and George Jervis on 30 April 1840 under the name 'Elphinstone Native Education Institution.'⁵ When Thomas Erskine Perry, the Chief Justice of Bombay, revived the Elphinstone College in 1844, he directed the education

department to print the best vernacular and English essays of students.⁶ So, the essays are available from 1850 onwards.

We have information about some of these essayists, while for others, we will have to wait for future historians to discover. Kylas Chunder Dutt became the first English fiction writer in India.⁷ Nanabhai Haridas (1832–1889), a first-year student of the Elphinstone College, held the Clare scholarship, won the first prize two consecutive years during 1850 and 1851, and was 18–19 years of age. Haridas joined the government as a translator and later became the first Indian judge of the Bombay High Court. He translated the Indian Civil and Criminal Laws into Gujarati.⁸ Narayan Bhai was a third-year student in a teacher training course. His essay ‘On the Effects of Castes upon a Nation or Nations,...’ was judged the best in the category of third-year students. He was closely associated with the Students Literary and Scientific Society. This society was set up in 1848 by Professor Patton of the Elphinstone College.⁹ Narayan Bhai also won the best prize in the essay competition held in 1850 for his 16,297-word-long essay on ‘On the Comparative Advantages of Native Education through the Vernacular Medium, or through the Vernacular and English.’ This essay has been included in my forthcoming book – *Routledge Companion to History of Education 1780-1947*. We do not have more information about such a versatile person. Balkrishna Sadashiv (Balcrishna Sadashiwa) became a teacher at a government school in Sholapur.¹⁰

Except for Kylas Chunder Dutt, these students were first-generation English learners and came from diverse caste backgrounds. Dutt and Nanabhai Haridas were Kayasthas, Narayan Bhai was from Kasar or coppersmith caste, and Balmokund was a Dalit. The students of Vidyalaya or the Hindu College had more prolonged exposure to English, while the students of Delhi, Banaras, and Agra had learned English for 4–5 years. The essays written on printing by Dutt from an elite, upper caste and cosmopolitan background and Balmokund from a poor Dalit background would make a fascinating comparative study of their use of the English language, classical imageries, the debates in Europe, and finally, their own location in the Indian society.

Notes

- 1 See Annual Report of the Elphinstone Institution for the year 1850, and Chapter 5 in this volume.
- 2 General Committee of Public Instruction Correspondence volume 5 part 2, GCPI Regulations for Schools and Colleges 30 August 1841.
- 3 Report of the GCPI 1836, 77–89, GCPI Correspondence Vol 11.
- 4 See, P.V. Rao, ‘Modern Education and the Revolt of 1857 in India,’ 25–42.
- 5 Parliamentary Papers, 1845, Vol. 34, 10–14, *Board collections*, No. 79941, Farish to the Court of Directors 27 August 1840.

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- 6 General Department 25 of 1847, Perry to the Secretary of the Elphinstone College, 30 March 1846.
- 7 See, Subhenu Mund, *The Making of the Indian English Literature*.
- 8 Mridula Ramanna, Profiles of English Educated Indians: Early Nineteenth Century Bombay City, 716.
- 9 *Proceedings of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society*, 1854–1856, 4.
- 10 *Ibid*, List of Members, viii.

PREFACE

The saga of T.B. Macaulay as the emblem of the colonial education policy has occupied the academic discourse for decades in India. The colonial educational policy of 190 years has been reduced to three and a half years of Macaulay's presence in India. He wrote 42 Education Minutes, but only one has been used to create a narrative which also ignores over a hundred Education Minutes by other British officials.

So when I began to teach the history of education in 2008, I confronted the daunting task of finding proper materials to teach, and except for the institutional, missionary, and a few regional histories, books on colonial educational policy contained a fair amount of mythology. Professor Richard Aldrich, Emeritus Professor of the Institute of Education, London, and Professor Biswamoy Pati of the University of Delhi, who are not with us today, were the first to urge me to write a comprehensive history of colonial educational policy in India.

This work is an attempt to analyse the macro-history of the colonial education policy on the basis of microdata. It looks beyond the well-accepted myths like the indigenous education of India was oral, and that colonial rule destroyed it, the colonial state imposed English education on Indians and so on. It looks beyond Macaulay to document and analyse the numerous Education Minutes and several educational debates across India. It brings forth how the British elites redefined, nurtured, and strengthened the caste system and started the process of the Brahmanisation of educational space. It is an attempt to understand the educational developments of British India from 1780–1860. Girls' education has not been addressed, as it started towards the end of the time period of this book.

During the course of data collection, 2009–2019, I received immense support from Professor Gary McCulloch at the International Centre for Historical Research in Education, in the Institute of Education, London. Professor Marcelo Caruso at the Institute of Educational Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin, and Professor Ratna Ghosh, Department of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University, Montreal, have constantly encouraged me.

PREFACE

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INTRODUCTION

Methodology and historiography

The steamboats passing up and down the Ganges are boarded
by native boys, begging not for money but for books.
– Charles Trevelyan, 1827¹

The introduction of English education in India has been attributed to a ‘colonial project,’ a tool to enforce ‘cultural imperialism,’ which had a ‘political agenda’ and which led to the ultimate ‘cultural subjugation of the colonised.’ The history of Indian education abounds with such theories. The term ‘English education’ widely used in India and the colonial documents denote ‘modern education.’ Some of the ‘modern,’ or English, schools taught modern sciences, mathematics, history, geography, and political economy through English as a medium of instruction along with English literature, local vernacular, and Sanskrit, while others taught English as a second language and modern curriculum through vernaculars. Both of these categories of schools were referred to as the ‘Anglo-vernacular schools’ and ‘English schools’ in colonial records. These were essentially secondary schools. Below them were primary schools, which were conducted entirely in the local vernacular. Before the introduction of modern education, the indigenous vernacular schools across India taught the vernacular literature and arithmetic. The colonial state, in most cases, followed a policy of incorporation. It gave the indigenous schoolteachers a small salary and some training to maintain an attendance register and prepare annual reports, and made these into government primary schools. It also retained the indigenous curriculum and added history and geography. This was the general trend across India during the first half of the nineteenth century, except in Bombay Presidency and Punjab. It continued well into the 1870s and 1880s in North India and Bengal.²

In direct contrast, the schools established by the Indians, such as the Vidyalaya in Calcutta, Elphinstone College in Bombay, Pacheyappa College in Madras, and numerous schools founded by little-known individuals across India were modelled on European schools, complete with a European

curriculum and British headmasters.³ These schools adopted English as a medium of instruction for both primary and secondary classes. The colonial state did not establish a single English school during first 95 years of its rule (1757–1852) and made a few half-hearted attempts later. The only educational institutions it established were Calcutta Madrasa, 1781; Banaras Sanskrit College, 1792; Madrassas at Bhagalpur and Jaunpur, 1811; College of Fort St George – Arabic and Sanskrit, 1812; Sanskrit Colleges at Calcutta and Poona, 1821; Agra College – Arabic and Sanskrit, 1824; and Delhi College – Arabic and Sanskrit, 1825.⁴ Under intense pressure from British liberals and the fear of interrogation in the British Parliament, the colonial state established a few schools after 1852. These historical facts upturn the image popularised by writers that the indigenous education was ‘informal, oral’ and destroyed by the British and that the introduction of English education was a ‘colonial project.’

The reason for a huge gap between the fact and the popular understanding of both the indigenous and the modern education system in India is non-application of methodology, which is called the ‘historical method’ for collecting and analysing the data. The works that argue, for instance, that ‘the English education was a colonial imposition’ are based on the assumption that, since the language of the colonial rulers was English, they imposed it on Indians. This is justified on the basis of the need for manning colonial bureaucracy and Indian aspiration for government jobs. These assumptions become theories in the narrative.⁵ If one goes with this theory and collects data to prove its correctness, one gets Macaulay’s Minute and instances of a few Indians working in the colonial government. However, in the process, one has to ignore Macaulay’s 41 other Education Minutes, which take a very different stand from his infamous Minute, and over one hundred Education Minutes from other British officers. So, the historical method is essential to write accurate history. E. H. Carr urged the history and social sciences to move much closer as the social sciences were posing new questions for the historians to answer and a new hypothesis to test.⁶ Such proximity could be achieved after the data is collected and analysed according to the historical method, and social science theories could be applied to test if they hold true in a given historical situation.

However, if a theory is formulated before collecting and analysing the data, it would lead to erroneous conclusions. The theories of imperialism have been applied to the development of modern education in India. For instance, Martin Carnoy has argued that the British administration used the missionaries to enforce cultural imperialism. He states that ‘under the military protection of the company, missionaries could get to know a geographic area more intimately and provide essential information about the social structure, culture and economic production, and trading habits of the people. They helped to legitimate foreign presence among the natives by demonstrating the superiority of Christianity.’⁷ The fact is that the British considered the

missionaries detrimental to their expansion and actively forbade them from entering India. After the missionaries agitated over a period of 20 years, they were allowed to enter India in 1813. By that time, the British had won 11 out of 14 wars (see chapter 3 in this book). Carnoy went on to strengthen his cultural imperialism theory by stating that the colonial state established the Vidyalaya, though it was established by the people of Calcutta led by Ram-mohan Roy (see chapter 4 in this book). Carnoy also sarcastically comments on the non-vegetarian food habits of Rammohan Roy to argue that Roy had adopted Western habits and was in a sense rootless;⁸ though Carnoy did not know that most Brahmins of eastern India are non-vegetarians.

Similarly, Gauri Viswanathan, in *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, attempts to apply Edward Said's theory of Orientalism to Indian history. In order to prove that the British imposed English education, she misrepresents the Bentinck Resolution, which was a policy statement without any legal sanction as the 'English Education Act,'⁹ a legally enforceable act. She has used this nonexistent 'Act' to facilitate the argument that the British forced Indians to study 'animated, vivified, hallowed, and baptised' English literature.¹⁰

The Beautiful Tree, written in 1983 by Dharmapal, is still influential as far as the indigenous education is concerned, follows an intense anti-western perspective. Dharmapal begins his book with the assertion that 'our knowledge about Indian education is derived from foreigners,' yet he uses the data collected by 'foreigners' to support his claim that the British destroyed the indigenous education. He situated the book in a statement made by M. K. Gandhi in London in 1931 that 'the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root, and left the root like that, and the beautiful tree perished.'¹¹ Dharmapal derived the title of the book from this statement. Dharmapal has used the Bengal and Madras data while he completely ignored the Bombay data collected during the same period. He also did not look at the data for the period 1840–1900, which would have shown that Gandhi's assumption was wrong. This theory completely ignores the fact that the British funded and nurtured the indigenous schools throughout the nineteenth century (see chapter 2 in this book).

Another instance of anti-Western interpretation applied to Indian education is that of Krishna Kumar. In his popular book *Political Agenda of Education*, Kumar has argued that the British imposed 'writing' or 'literary' education in direct contrast to 'Indian reliance on oral tradition.' To substantiate the argument he quotes a statement by William Arnold, the Director of Public Instruction of Panjab:

We found a population with their own idea of the meaning of education, and to that idea thoroughly attached; and to whom our

idea of education, being inconsistent with their own, was thoroughly distasteful; as to an Asiatic everything is distasteful which is new.¹²

Arnold's statement was in reference to the opposition of the Panjabi-speaking population to his imposition of Urdu as the official language and the medium of instruction (see chapter 9 in this book). Instead of using the archival records, Kumar uses 2,000-year-old Hindu mythological stories to substantiate his arguments on the orality of indigenous education, the autonomy of teachers, and subservient status of students in the history of Indian education.¹³ He considers mythology as history, and as a consequence he denies ontological status of history as a rigorous social science discipline. Also, how could Indian tradition be predominantly oral after it has produced 100,000 inscriptions, 500 texts, and 11 scripts?

These theory-based works do not rely on sources or the analysis of sources according to any given methodology of either history or any of the social sciences but rather construct stories according to convenience, or what can be called 'as you like it' history. They reject the primacy of facts and the distinction between 'proper history' and 'ideological history' and regard 'true interpretation' as an oxymoron.¹⁴ Anyone relying on the sources and historical method is accused of being empiricist in nature.¹⁵ The following section on the research methodology is essential to address this lacuna in the history of education in India.

The historical method

The modern historical method was developed by Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886). His 1821 essay 'On the task of the Historian' made a complete separation of subject and object and developed a scientific method of analysing the sources for writing history. He opposed eulogising and moralising history and argued that the task of history 'is not to judge the past or instruct the present for the benefit of the future. Its business is simply to show how it really was and as it actually happened – *wei es eigentlich gewesen*.'¹⁶ Ranke's writings and the scientific method he developed to analyse documents made him the Founder of modern history. He exhorted the historians to study the past 'in its own right,' 'see things as they really were,' and 'understand what happened, purely in its own terms.'¹⁷ Ranke has sometimes been mistakenly identified as a Positivist. He upheld the autonomy of historical method and declined the role of the philosopher. What Ranke rejected was not philosophy as such but the notion that philosophical systems could be used to explain history. He criticised writers who 'out of the infinite array of facts, select those which they wish to believe. This has been called the philosophy of history.'¹⁸

The primacy of facts, ‘*die strenge Darstellung der Tatsache*,’ is the most effective prescription for the historian’s work. It means a return to the sources, to the evidence provided by them, and to the decision not to make an abstract theory. The historian has to get to know and to present the facts as they are. A historian has to abstain from philosophical speculations. Strict presentation of the particular events and facts, even if it is unattractive and dull, should unquestionably be the supreme law in historiography, which cannot imitate philosophical procedures of abstraction and generalisation. Ranke propounded ‘a scientific approach to historiography, based upon the critical study of sources. He developed a method for such a critical study that allows the use of evidence provided by the sources to discredit distortions and to isolate their origins and infer true descriptions of the past. According to Ranke, the scientific study of history could only thrive if philosophical speculations about history came to an end.’ Historiographic knowledge is documentary, not speculative. Historiography’s medium is the document, not the conceptual construction. Historiography is concerned with the particular and the individual, not the general and the universal.¹⁹

The application of historical method is not limited to inanimate archival documents; it can also be applied to interviews, and Ranke used the interview method to help write history. It can also be ultimately applied to the historians to see whether their writings have ideological and social bias or they stand up to the test of critical questioning. Such critical scrutiny is essential to see whether historians are projecting their personal ideologies onto the historical sources. Siegfried Baur has analysed that ‘whoever misuses history to satisfy ideological needs can never accept Ranke’s histories, critical source-based science, and its autonomous movements.’²⁰ E. H. Carr has correctly observed that ‘the question of whether or not history is a science has been discussed in Anglo-American circles (English speaking part of the world) largely because of ‘an eccentricity of the English language.’ The German term *Wissenschaft* simply means ‘a discipline or body of organised knowledge.’ Thus, *Naturwissenschaft* can be aptly translated as ‘natural sciences,’ while *Geschichtswissenschaft*, which translates into ‘historical sciences,’ cannot be used.²¹

The emphasis on the primacy of facts can be criticised because the voices of natives, women, and lower classes cannot be heard in the ‘colonial archives’ in the midst of documents created by upper-class British and upper-caste Indian men. It is true that elite men always create large volumes of information about themselves and their ideas, and their followers multiply the sources by adding on to them. However, with a persistent effort it is possible to find the prejudice of these men as well as dissenting voices. One single copy of a dissenting note from the marginalised could upturn the entire narrative. A single essay by a low-caste teenage boy or a petition from a village

to the government can upturn the grand narratives of 11 conservative elitist governor-generals of India. The files in Indian archives are divided into A, B, and C. The 'A' files contain reports which the colonial government created for public consumption as well as to convince the higher authorities, such as the British Parliament. These are widely available. However, the 'B' and particularly the 'C' files contain the voices of common people. They are in handwritten form. They take longer to search, and it sometimes takes hours to read a single page. If one is persistent enough, it is possible to record counter-currents. As Richard Aldrich argues, 'The duty of the historian of education is to rescue from oblivion those, whose voices have not yet been heard and whose stories have not yet been told.'²²

The methodology

As the discipline of history is concerned with analysing, explaining, and describing the events of the past in a critical and scientific way, objectivity is imperative. Objectivity means dispassionate, disinterested, and scientific treatment of all events which a historian investigates. Historical research has two functions to perform. One is the collection of data, and the other is the analysis of that data to explain what, why, and how historical events and processes took place. While collecting the data, a historian does not select data but collects every document that is available on the topic of research. The limitations that bind the hands of a historian are geographical and financial. For instance, an Indian historian may not have funds to work in the India Office Records of the British Library in London and may limit the research to the archival data available in India. This is not selective use of data but difficulties faced by historians from developing countries. Historical research scientifically investigates and explores the past and presents it in its proper context. A historical study in common with other social sciences and sciences involves a perpetual interaction between questions and evidence.²³ This analytical operation has two stages. The first stage is called heuristics, or external criticism, and the second stage is called hermeneutics, or internal criticism.

Heuristics or external criticism

Historical research begins with the basic premise that all data is suspect unless proven otherwise. Historical sources for analysing the history of education in India consist of government documents, private papers, journals, and newspapers for the modern period. It is possible that documents might have been written by someone other than the claimed author. It is also possible that someone might have added or removed certain passages from the original texts which would have benefitted him – or someone dear to him – or under pressure from power centres. Under such circumstances, it

becomes the duty of a historian to doubt every aspect of the text until it has been critically tested. So the process of external criticism assists in proving the authenticity of sources by determining the authorship, date, and textual accuracy of a historical document.²⁴

Hermeneutics or internal criticism

After the credentials of a historical document have been established, a historian analyses its content. This process is called hermeneutics, or internal criticism. This intricate technique has two parts – positive criticism and negative criticism. The purpose of positive criticism is to know what the author means by making a particular statement²⁵ (in other words, establishing the meaning of words at the time the text was written). For instance, the nineteenth-century official records mention that the government closed down a number of schools because they had ‘pupils from the miserable background.’ The application of ‘positive criticism’ reveals that the term ‘miserable background’ refers to both poor upper-caste students and low-caste students. This can be done by exploring in which other context the colonial officials used the term ‘miserable background.’ Positive criticism gives us the author’s conception and general notions, which he or she represents at that time.

The purpose of negative criticism is to verify whether what the author has said confirms to what really happened in order to determine the correctness of the facts. A historical inquiry must ascertain whether the author of the historical document had the opportunity to know the facts as an eyewitness. If not, what was the source of information? How much time had elapsed between the event and the record? After this is determined, the next step is to place the document for a series of three tests. First, was the source or author able to tell the truth? The ability of an author to tell the truth depends on his or her closeness to the event in terms of time, geographical location, and language skills. This in itself is not a sufficient proof of authenticity, and it leads to the next question – was the source willing to tell the truth? This second step helps to determine whether the author has written a document for the benefit of a person or cause dear to him or her. The author may also be biased towards the subject of his or her testimony.²⁶ For instance, H.S. Reid was appointed in 1850 to carry out a survey of indigenous educational institutions and the feasibility of extending government support to such schools in the North-Western Provinces (present Uttar Pradesh). Did Reid have the ability to tell the truth? He did, as he was proficient in both Hindi and Urdu, and he visited numerous villages and towns; however, was he willing to tell the truth? No. He reported to the government that the people of Etawah town thought that the proposal to establish schools was ‘to collect children to offer them up as a propitiatory sacrifice, after the completion of Ganga canal.’ Within two years, A.O. Hume went to Etawah as a district officer

and found unprecedented enthusiasm for education, which resulted in the establishment of 185 schools (see chapter 9). This shows that Reid wrote a fabricated report to represent the people as uncivilised.

This is precisely the reason that the final step in the direction of ascertaining the accuracy of a document is to find out whether any contradictory evidence exists in other sources. It is known in history that influential and powerful groups create an enormous number of documents which would confuse a historian. For instance, there exists a copious amount of writings on the idea that indigenous education in India was entirely oral. Most of them derive from the same source or set of sources. Historical evidence shows that only a very small number of Sanskrit schools which taught the Vedas were oral, while in thousands of other indigenous schools writing was taught on the very first day.²⁷ Even when there is no contradictory evidence, the historicity of a document should rest on two or more independent, reliable sources. For instance, the lieutenant-governor of the North-Western Provinces, James Thomason, established a system of primary schools called Hulkabandi. These schools were held in very high esteem by the senior British officials for almost a century, and they repeatedly attempted to extend the same model to other parts of India. Thomason also established an engineering college at Roorkee. Taken together, Thomason's achievements appear to be commendable. However, if we analyse other documents of his administration, we come across the fact that Thomason closed down high schools at Allahabad, Jounpur, and Gorakhpur, because they had only 'pupils from the miserable background.' These schools could have provided competent candidates for the engineering college. This shows not only his class bias but also the fact that Thomason wanted to train Indians to be low-level assistants, not engineers. This is further corroborated by the fact that he kept the curriculum of the Hulkabandi schools so low that in arithmetic 98 per cent of schools did not teach simple multiplication and division even in the fourth year, which was the highest class. Such low educational standards resulted in the low representation of students from the North-Western Provinces in the universities in the nineteenth century and general educational backwardness in the twentieth century. So if a historical analysis concentrates on certain government policy documents of the Roorkee Engineering College alone without looking into other activities, Thomason appears to be a hero, while his responsibility for destroying the educational system in the North-Western Provinces escapes scrutiny.

Historians usually do not discuss methodology, because there is only one method of analysing the written sources. If such is the case, the question arises as to why historians differ so widely on identical events. This is due to the perspectives of historians. For instance, the British Parliament earmarked 100,000 rupees as the annual education budget for British India in 1813. An imperialist historian might look at that as a great achievement, as pre-colonial rulers in India donated only for the teaching of sacred literature,

not secular. Moreover, Britain itself had not recognised the responsibility of the state towards education. It was done first for India in 1813 and for Britain in 1833. A Marxist historian might question the imperialist interpretation by stating that the children of the peasants and marginalised sections were completely left out of its benefits. A liberal and critical historian might look at every policy debate and delve into account books to show that the colonial state withheld and diverted funds earmarked for education and repeatedly sabotaged the process with the exception of the interventions made by a few conscientious liberal British and Scottish officers. All three perspectives, though they differ widely, are based on facts.

Historiography of Indian education for the period 1780–1860²⁸

The historiography of Indian education, particularly the institutional histories, is rich and nuanced. David Kopf's *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* analyses the debates and developments in the early part of the nineteenth century and questions the traditional history-writing of 'the British impact,' which focuses on 'the westernisation and modernisation,' and 'the Indian response,' which focuses on 'Indian heritage and renaissance.' Kopf pertinently asks whether the Bengal renaissance was a process of westernisation or a reinterpretation of tradition.²⁹ To answer this central question, Kopf attempts to study the 'social, cultural, psychological and intellectual changes that were brought about in Bengal as a result of contact between British officials and missionaries on the one hand and the Hindu intelligentsia on the other.' It is in this background that he studies the birth of Orientalism and the establishment of the College of Fort William, which was a unique experiment undertaken by governor-general Wellesley to 'keep the erroneous doctrines of the French revolution' from reaching the young British recruits serving in India.³⁰ Kopf analyses the activities of the Orientalists and the complex process of cultural exchange that brought about a change in the intellectual domain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

This complex process of interaction between Europeans and Indians in the field of education forms the backdrop of Bhagaban Prasad Majumdar's *First Fruits of English Education: 1817–1857*. Majumdar begins the narrative with the establishment of the Hindu College in Calcutta by Rammohan Roy. It was the first college established in Asia to teach modern sciences and English literature. Majumdar is the first historian to analyse the social background of the students, the structure, the functioning, and the curriculum of the college. He has also critically analysed the life and activities of some of the prominent British and Indian teachers and students. The book contains a wealth of information on the development of radicalism and political consciousness among the teachers and students of the college.³¹ Though the

book is a social history of Hindu College in Calcutta, it brings in relevant details from other parts of India to see the similarities between different educational experiments.

Margrit Pernau's edited volume *The Delhi College* looks beyond the institution and unfolds a complex dynamics of European, not just British, and Muslim interaction in the first half of the nineteenth century. This institution was established by the British in 1825 to educate the Muslim elites in Arabic and Persian. Its first principal was Felix Boutros, a Frenchman; the second principal was Aloys Sprenger, an Austrian from Tyrol; and another important person of influence was Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (who dominated the educational scenario in Punjab for the next 25 years), a German Jew from Hungary. The study also focuses on some early students of the college, such as Ramachandra and Mohanlal Kashmiri. Pernau effectively strings together the history of an institution, the society, and the city with the larger canvas of European influences.³²

Nita Kumar, in her book *Lessons from Schools: The History of Education in Banaras*, sees complexities arising from what she calls an aggressive imposition of the homogenised formal structure on the existing Sanskrit schools, or pathasalas.³³ Michael Dodson further investigates the Sanskrit College at Banaras in *Orientalism, Empire and National Culture: India 1770–1880*. He explores how, in spite of better state salaries and state assurance of jobs, the college was unpopular among the Sanskrit scholars and produced only four law graduates during 1792–1810.³⁴

The historiography of missionary education is rich. D.H. Emmott's 'Alexander Duff and the Foundation of Modern Education in India' and M. A. Laird's *Missionaries and Education in Bengal 1793–1837* go beyond the simplistic picture of putting all missionaries, particularly all protestant missionaries, into the same basket. If Emmott addresses the peculiarities of the educational activities of Alexander Duff, a Presbyterian missionary, to his Gaelic roots, Laird has effectively placed the difference between the English and the Scottish Protestant Christianity and the education system as a backdrop to the educational activities of these missionaries.³⁵ Until Duff came to Calcutta, the missionaries gave a very basic vernacular literacy. Emmott analysed how Duff 'as a native of the Scottish Highlands, had realised very early that among Gaelic-speaking people the demands of higher education could only be met by English. Duff placed Gaelic and Bengali in the same category.' It was the popularity of Duff's school that made the other missionaries pursue a similar path, albeit reluctantly. It was Gaelic-speaking Duff who was the most fervent supporter of English education, while the English-speaking Baptist missionaries were ardent supporters of Bengali as the medium of instruction.³⁶ Robert Eric Frykenburg has analysed a wide range of missionary activities in the field of education, from the first Protestant Mission set up at Tranquebar in 1706 by Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plutschau to the twentieth-century interactions.³⁷ Koji

Kawashima, in an in-depth study of the missionary education, has questioned the notion of ‘the missionaries as handmaiden of imperialism.’ The school, established by the Maharaja of Travancore, taught the Bible, while no school established by the British allowed the Bible to be used in any way. Through meticulously collected statistics, he has proved that a Hindu state promoted missionary education, while the British officers restricted it. When the Hindu Diwans were in charge of education, there were 1,265 aided missionary schools, and when A. C. Mitchell, a British official, was made the education secretary, within a year the number of schools came down to 472.³⁸

Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir accurately analyse that ‘the Indians who were actively involved in the spread of English education were also known for their love of Sanskrit and mother tongue and enormously contributed to the development of their mother tongue. It is difficult to square this dual commitment to British and Bengali culture with the Gramscian model of cultural hegemony.’ According to them, the Indian public was flexible enough to adapt to the British presence, absorbing the Western culture and the English language and in the process enriching, rather than enervating, existing intellectual and cultural trends.³⁹

There are several well-researched books based on archival sources pertaining to various provinces of India. R. V. Parulekar’s *Indigenous Education* is a collection of microdata of western India, and the introduction gives important insights. His other three volumes deal with educational records of the early period of colonial rule.⁴⁰ Archana Chakravarti’s *History of Education in Assam, 1826–1919* deals with colonial policies and the emergence of the Assamese language as a medium of instruction in schools.⁴¹ Jatashankar Jha’s *Beginnings in Modern Education in Mithila* gives local details of the region and shows how the Darbanga administration closed down primary schools because the ‘peasants behaved badly towards its Maharaja,’ which resulted in the region remaining educationally backward compared with other parts of Bihar.⁴² Uday Shankar and C.L. Kundu’s edited volume *Education in Haryana* brings out some historical information on the region.⁴³ J. Mangamma’s *The Rate Schools of Godavari* shows the process of the closing down of Thomas Munro’s schools, the establishment of ‘Rate Schools,’ and how they were converted to Local Fund Schools in the 1870s.⁴⁴ These microstudies are an invaluable contribution to historiography. Tim Allender’s *Ruling Through Education* elaborately describes the British educational policies in Punjab.⁴⁵ Stuart Blackburn’s *Print, Folklore and Nationalism in Colonial South India* and Bhavani Raman’s *Document Raj: Writing and Scribes in Early Colonial South India* deal with the rise of Tamil pundits who prepared the modern grammar texts as well as the pedagogy of the Tamil indigenous schools. Both these texts deal with the formation of the College of Fort St George in Madras and its impact on the south Indian vernaculars.⁴⁶

The present work attempts to go beyond Macaulay to document multiple debates on modern education across British India, from the establishment of the first colonial educational institution, the Madrasa at Calcutta in 1780 – through the end of the administration of the East India Company (EIC) and the beginning of the administration of the British crown in 1860. For the first time, many of these debates have been brought into the public domain. The Indian voices as recorded in the petitions for the establishment of schools and students' essays have also been analysed. It situates them in their socio-political context of the imperial administration as well as the liberal Scottish dissent to imperial agenda. This work attempts to bring into mainstream history the voices of unknown students and ordinary people.

Notes

- 1 Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India*, 166–167.
- 2 See Mukherjee, *Report on the Village Schools in North-Western Province and Punjab*, Minute by J. Willoughby, 12 January 1850, Report of the Board of Education 1850, 134–192.
- 3 See chapter 3 for details of such schools.
- 4 All the schools established by Thomas Munro and T.B. Macaulay were closed down after their death or departure, respectively. See chapters 6 and 7.
- 5 See Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*, Kumar, *Political Agenda of Education*.
- 6 Evans, *In Defence of History*, 38.
- 7 Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, 88.
- 8 *Ibid*, 98–99.
- 9 Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*, 41.
- 10 *Ibid*, 80.
- 11 Dharmapal, *The Beautiful Tree*, xi, 1.
- 12 Kumar, *Political Agenda*, 50–55.
- 13 *Ibid*, 86–87.
- 14 Rao, *History as Historiography*, 5–10.
- 15 McCulloch, *The Struggle for the History of Education*, 72.
- 16 *Ibid*, 267–271.
- 17 Rao, *History as Historiography*, 5–6.
- 18 Wines, ed., *Leopold Von Ranke*, 101–102.
- 19 Gil, 'Leopold Ranke,' 381–385.
- 20 Quoted in Boldt, 'Ranke,' 468.
- 21 Evans, *In Defence of History*, 45.
- 22 Aldrich, *Lessons from History of Education*, 18.
- 23 *Ibid*, 6.
- 24 Ali, *History: Its Theory and Method*, 112–116.
- 25 *Ibid*, 117–124.
- 26 *Ibid*, 125–131.
- 27 See chapter 2 in this book.
- 28 An earlier version titled 'Trends in the Historiography of Indian Education' was published in *Jahrbuch für Historische Bildungsforschung*. Used with permission.
- 29 Kopf, *British Orientalism*, vii–viii.
- 30 *Ibid*, 45.

INTRODUCTION

- 31 Majumdar, *First Fruits of English Education*.
- 32 Pernau, ed., *The Delhi College, Traditional Elites, the Colonial State and Education Before 1857*.
- 33 Kumar, *Lessons from Schools, History of Education in Banaras*.
- 34 Dodson, *Orientalism, Empire and National Culture*, 55–58.
- 35 Laird, *Missionaries and Education in Bengal 1793-1837*.
- 36 Emmott, 'Alexander Duff and the Foundation of Modern Education in India,' 160–169.
- 37 Frykenberg, 'Modern Education in South India,' 37–65, Frykenberg, *Christianity in India*.
- 38 Kawashima, *Missionaries and a Hindu State Travancore*, 100–105.
- 39 Zastoupil and Moir, *The Great Indian Education Debate*, 14–15.
- 40 Parulekar, *Survey of Indigenous Education*, Parulekar, *Selections from Educational Records* (Bombay) Part I, II, and III 1826–1840.
- 41 Chakraverti, *History of Education in Assam 1826–1919*.
- 42 Jha, *Beginnings in Modern Education in Mithila*.
- 43 Shankar and Kundu, ed., *Education in Haryana*.
- 44 Mangamma, *The Rate Schools of Godavari*.
- 45 Allender, *Ruling Through Education*.
- 46 Blackburn, *Print, Folklore and Nationalism*; Raman, *Document Raj*.

2

INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS IN INDIA

In the indigenous vernacular schools, 'parents of good caste do not hesitate to send their children to schools conducted by teachers of an inferior caste and even of a different religion. . . . this is true of the Chandal, and other low caste teachers enumerated.'

– William Adam¹

The Hindoos and Mahomedans, as well as the different castes of the Hindoos, a few of the lowest excepted, mix together for the purpose of education without the slightest reluctance or inconvenience.

– Mountstuart Elphinstone²

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, India had a diverse and thriving indigenous system of education, which comprised both sacred and secular. The Sanskrit schools taught literature and sacred texts in most cases exclusively to Brahmin boys, and the Madrasas taught Arabic language and Islamic literature to Muslim boys. The Persian schools taught Persian literature, and the vernacular schools taught Indian vernaculars, such as Kannada, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, and so on, along with arithmetic, to boys of all castes and religions. All these schools were single-teacher schools. Alexander Johnstone (1775–1849), one of the founders of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, has left behind a very elaborate account of the education system in south India during the latter part of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Johnstone was born in Scotland and was taken to Madras at an early age. He spent his childhood studying Tamil, Telugu, and Hindustani alongside native boys. He was sent to Britain in 1792 for higher education. During 1802–1819, Johnstone served in various positions, including the Chief Justice of Ceylon. He fought for the abolition of slavery in Ceylon. Johnstone has recorded the details of the *upanayana* ceremony performed by Hindu parents of all castes before initiating their sons into formal learning in peninsular India.³ Johnstone argued