



CARRYING SCOTTISH LEGACIES: INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE 19th CENTURY

Dr. Chandni Sarkar

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Education, Bankura University

ABSTRACT

Analysing the education system of any nation, from inception to present time, always requires meticulous reviewing of history- political frameworks since it has come to its present shape due to multitudinous influences from its past immemorial sources. Indian education system, right from its inception to present post-modern condition often evaluated as deeply sustained and modified product of multicultural traditions and legacies. Race, ethnicity, place conscious traditions, geographical implications, foreign invasions etc. all modified in the present articulated form of education practiced or rather revered in India. Education during Vedic junctures to dark medieval period to present Post-modern period appeared to be linked and structured by cultural strings of different educational legacies. Scots and the Scottish missionaries in India had left a tremendous poignant mark in Indian education system. Their mission and erudite vision about education has transformed the educational setting and atmosphere looming large in India, engrossing socio-politico, intellectual and cultural spheres. The present study is, therefore, an attempt to elucidate their multi-faceted educational endeavours in the 19th century India and the far-reaching consequences which continues to bedazzle and shape present Indian education system.

KEY WORDS: Indian Education System, Vedic junctures, Traditions, Scottish missionaries, Cultural Spheres.

INTRODUCTION

To analyse or critically evaluate the entire education system of any nation, right from its inception to present time frame, is a task which requires, apart from other conditions, utmost resourcefulness, prudent insight, meticulous reviewing of history- political frameworks, and not to forget enormous dedication and time. Indian education system, right from its inception to present post-modern condition often evaluated as deeply sustained and modified product of multicultural traditions and legacies. Race, ethnicity, place conscious traditions, geographical implications, foreign invasions etc. all modified in the present articulated form of education practiced or rather revered in India. Education during Vedic junctures to dark medieval period to

present Post-modern period appeared to be linked and structured by cultural strings of different educational legacies. Citing instances of educational traditions like 'Gurugriha', 'Maktabs', 'Viharas', missionary schools and colleges to e-learning in India are all traditionally concomitant to pedagogues and pedagogy rooted in Indian cultural education system. Scotts and the Scottish missionaries in India had left a tremendous poignant mark in Indian education system. Their mission and erudite vision about education has transformed the educational setting and atmosphere looming large in India, engrossing socio-politico, intellectual and cultural spheres. The present study is, therefore, an attempt to elucidate their multi-faceted educational endeavours in the 19th century India and the far-reaching consequences which continues to bedazzle and shape present Indian education system.

Background Conceptual Framework in the 19th century India:

Scottish Missionary Activities: The Scottish missionary activities in India are always appreciated for their educational endeavours among Indian masses. Apart from other missionary activities, educating the poor Indian masses, establishment of schools and colleges, creating educational opportunities for women etc, are some reverend activities of Scottish missionaries which to a larger extent shaped the educational atmosphere of present India. According to historical annals it was the Charter Act of East India Company in 1813 which contributed in setting "the door to missionary activity in India ajar" and their number steadily rises from "36 missionaries in 1813 to 130 persons through 8 mission societies by the year 1830" (Siga Arles, "The Mission of Education: A comment from India -Where we had been, where we are, where we ought to go?"). In this juncture we can quote Stephen Neill, who dwelling on the importance of the Scottish mission schools, observes that "The Scots succeeded because what they offered was so much better than what was being offered by others" and he also pays a generous tribute to the missionaries that they were free from racial superiority and their relationship with their pupils was akin to the traditional Indian relationship between the 'guru' and 'chela' as beautifully expressed in the ancient Hindu classics.

Scottish Educational Endeavours at Colonial Raj Period in India

Alexander Duff (1806-78), started a school in Calcutta in the year 1830, was deemed as the first Scottish educational missionary to India who played a pivotal role in establishing the University of Calcutta in 1857 and India's first medical school. Duff's 'downward filtration theory', though somewhat disputed, is an attempt to convert high class hindus to Christians and impart through them education to the masses. Duff was also remembered as a staunch supporter of English language as medium of instruction a mirror image of which is reflected in Macauly's 'Minute on Education'. The missionary school opened by Duff in Calcutta became 'for a generation the largest and most successful missionary school in India' (D.F. Wright et al. (eds), Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology (Edinburgh, 1993), p. 259). Duff contributed importantly in the general development of the educational framework of India by pressing to introduce the 'grant in aid' system in Wood's Despatch (1854). To infuse discipline among the students James Anderson introduced the 'monitor system'. Anderson also advocated vehemently in favour of women education in India. He argued in 'Native Herald', that, 'Native females are to be permanently raised from their present fearful degradation ... the blessed light of the cross, and the love of Him who hung there, must beam into their dark souls'. William Miller, around 1862,

suggested that the task of the educational work is 'ploughing and sowing', whereas the responsibility of 'harvesting' would be of those engaged in preaching (William Miller, 'The Place of Education as a Missionary Agency', Report of the General Missionary Conference (London, 1873), pp. 107-8.). William Miller also started the 'student homes', in 1881 on an experimental basis where they provided both lodging and boarding under one roof to the students without any discrimination. Apart from the few above mentioned Scottish educational endeavours there remains many more attempts to uplift and strengthen the educational objectives of the then India by the Scots, viz., encouraging educational debates and writings, educational movements, studying and assessing of Indian vernaculars etc.

Scottish British Raj Employees and their contribution in India. Most of the activities of Scots in 'British-India' were noted as a series of revisionary biographies ranging from that on eighteenth-century Scots like Henry Dundas, president of the Board of Control for India (1793-1801), to early nineteenth-century imperial administrators like Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay (1819-27), and Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras (1819-27). These writings provide luminary vision about a competent India. Alexander Hamilton is referred as an outstanding philologist whose knowledge of Sanskrit had few rivals among European scholars. Hamilton took a cadetship in the Bengal Army in 1783 and continued his educational zeal. Professor Avril A. Powell in his book "Scottish Orientalists and India: The Muir Brothers, Religion, Education and Empire" (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press), 2010, pp. 336.) demonstrated the insightful contribution of two nineteenth-century Indian Civil Service (ICS) officials, the Muir brothers, depicting their incessant penchant of Indian vernaculars (Sanskrit and Arabic) and their consequent labour in shaping and reshaping the religious milieu and educational zeal among Indian masses.

Inculcation of feelings of Educational Independence through Scottish Legacies An outstanding feature of Scottish system of education is the incorporation of debates and educational writings. In this relation, we witness some of the eminent scholars of India who defended their rich vernaculars when criticised and compared with English language. To cite here is Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the great Hindu philosopher who having studied under the Scottish missionaries during 1904-8 at Madras Christian College, defended himself in the arena of polemics as brought out by Eric J. Sharpe: 'It may well have been Hogg's book, Karma and Redemption (1904-5 in article form), in which the ethical basis of Vedanta was subjected to criticism which prompted Radhakrishnan to write his first work of Hindu apologetics, "Ethics of Vedanta (1908)". Also, such consciousness can be witnessed in the case of 'Bengal Renaissance' where illumination through English education prompted the scholar Bengali youths to defend and preserve their nation's educational heritage and culture. Bengal renaissance would not been that forceful in its bearings if there not been the visions of great educational reformers and teachers as Derozio, David Hare, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other socially updated thinkers like Sir S. N. Bannerjee, who is regarded as the father of Indian nationalism. He praised Macaulay and David Hare (a pioneer of English education in India) in these words: "The future civilization of India will blend all that is great, noble, manly, and worthy of imitation in the civilization of the West, with all that is spiritual, gentle, tender, sweet, and benignant in the civilization of the East".

Conclusion: The legacy of Scottish educational missions and zeal helped Indian education system to bloom confidently. It is their visions and efforts which resulted in infusing the importance of education among Indians who had traversed a rough colonial period. In this study I have delimited the Scottish legacies universe due to time constraint and want to conclude with Michael Fry who has reviewed the vision of some eighteenth-century Scottish enlightenment orientalist, such as the historian William Roberston (1721-93), Alexander Murray (1775-1813), James Mackintosh (1765-1832), the Persianist Alexander Dow (died 1779), the Sanskritist Alexander Hamilton (1762-1824), the astronomer Colin Mackenzie (c. 1753-1821) and the archaeologist Jonathan Duncan (1756-1811) and summarised that that they bore a wish to allow 'India to find her own way along the path of progress that Scotland had already traversed'.

REFERENCES:

- Ambrose Jeyasekaran, T. (1988). 'William Miller and the Meaning of Christian Education in India', Bulletin of Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies. p. 48.
- Bannerjee, S.N. (1878). *Lord Macaulay and High Education in India*. Calcutta. p. 22.
- Campbell, A.B. (1858). *Madras Mission of the Free Church of Scotland*. Report of the South India Missionary Conference. P. 37
- Chetty, K. (1924). 'Dr. William Miller'. Madras. p. 27. 16
- Commonwealth Relations Office. (1854). 'India and Bengal Despatches'. Vol. 87. Despatch. para. 7
- Despatch of Directors of the East India Company to Bengal, 18 February 1824.
- Duff, A. (1839). *India and Indian Missions*. Edinburgh. p.19.
- Forrester, D. B. (Paris, 1978). *Christianity and Early Indian Nationalism*. Colloques Internationaux du C.N.R.S. 582, p. 332.
- Fry, M. (2001). *The Scottish Empire*. Edinburgh. P 89-90, 156
- Ghosh, S. C., "Dalhousie, Charles Wood and the Education Despatch of 1854", History of Education, TV (Summer 1975), p. 42.
- Hamilton, A.A.R. iv (1802), Account of books...', 23-32; 'Asiatic Researches, vol. vi', E.R. I (Oct. 1802), 30-7.
- Hinnels, J. & Sharpe, E.J. (Eds). (1972). *Hinduism*. p. 101.
- Indian Education Commission Report, Vol 1, Pg 21
- Ingleby, J.C. (2000). *Missionaries, Education and India: Issues in Protestant Missionary Education in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Delhi: ISPCK.
- Macaulay et al., (1855). *The Indian Civil Service*. London.
- Macaulay, T. B. (1835). 'Minute on Education in India'. p. 107. Collected from the records of the Department of Public Instruction, Calcutta.

- Miller, W. (1873). 'The Place of Education as a Missionary Agency', Report of the General Missionary Conference. London. pp. 107-8. 9
- Miller, W. (1873). 'The Place of Education as a Missionary Agency', Report of the General Missionary Conference. London. pp. 107-8
- Minutes of the United Free Church of Scotland (May 1908-April 1912), nos. 1526, 1636.
- Neill, S. (1964). *A History of Christian Missions*. London: Penguin Books. p.265
- Neill, S. (1985). 'A History of Christianity in India (1707-1856)'. Cambridge. p. 327.
- Pittendrigh, G. & Meston, W. (1907). *Story of Our Madras Mission*.
- POWELL, A.A. (2010). *Scottish Orientalists and India: The Muir Brothers, Religion, Education and Empire*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press. pp. 336
- Report of the General Missionary Conference, 1873.
- Report of the Indian Education Commission: 1881-82 (1883). Calcutta. p. 18.
- Report of the United Free Church of Scotland Foreign Missions 1912. pp. 25-6.
- Robertson, W. (1791). *An historical disquisition concerning the knowledge which the ancients had of India; and the progress of trade with that country prior to the discovery of the passage to it by the Cape of Good Hope*. London. pp. 3
- Said, E. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. Chatto and Windus, London.
- Sharpe. *Not to Destroy*. P 82-108.
- Siga, A. (2003). "The Mision of Education: A Comment From India - Where we had been, where we are, where we ought to go?" 1 &2. pp. 30-40
- Slater, T. E. (1882). *The Philosophy of Missions*. London.
- The influence of the Madras Christian College and the missionary teachers therein on Radhakrishnan's life and thought form part of the author's doctoral work entitled 'Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Christianity', submitted to the University of Madras, 1994.
- Williams, M. M. (1887). *Modern India and the Indians*. London.
- Wright, D. F. et al. (Eds). (1993). *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*. Pg. 259.