

T. B. Macaulay and Myths In Indian Education System

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Abstract:

“A single shelf of a good European library was worth of the whole native literature of Indian and Arabic” T. B. Macaulay.

India is civilization which is most misunderstood by its own people. James Mill, T.B. Macaulay and their education system made the conditioning of so called educated Indians. It did not allow Anglicized Indians to see the facts and establish the truth. Very few thinkers tried to erase the impact of the strange intellectual schizophrenia suffered by the Indian intellectual class. This paper is going to weed out so many myths those are now become part of our education system. Widely it is accepted that there was no as such education in India before British colonial rule. A brief survey was conducted in 1822-1825 by the British government. The reports of this survey are not only flabbergasting but also break all kind of myths established by colonial rule in this country.

Keywords: Colonial rule, Myths, twice born, beautiful tree, Indian indigenous education.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Mahatma Gandhi was invited for the round table conference on India in 1931. Royal institute of international affairs arranged the lecture of Mr. Gandhi.¹ In this meeting Gandhiji briefly dwelt with on the causes of illiteracy in India and what he said seemed to have made sparks fly. The meeting was held on 20th October 1931. very prominent and influential personalities from all parts of England were present on the occasion. it was presided over by Lord Lothian. The subject of Gandhi was “fortune of India” Initially he dwelt with Hindu Muslim issue, the problem of untouchability and the deep and ever deepening poverty of the 85% of Indian people who lived in villages. From this he moved to education. He said “India is more illiterate than it was fifty or hundreds years ago. The British administrator instead of looking after education and other matters which had existed 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”

Mr. Gandhi was immediately challenged by the Philip Hartog,² a founder of the school of oriental studies, London, a former vice chancellor of the University of Dacca. Within few days after reaching to India, Gandhiji was in Yervada Prison. From there he wrote to Hartog on 15 February 1932 informing him of his inability at that moment to satisfy him but mentioned that he had asked Prof K. T. Shah to look into the matter. Prof K T shah’s long and detailed letter did not satisfy Mr Hartog.

Mr. Dharmपाल a well-known Gandhian thinker³ (1922-2006) started his research after Indian independence to find out the facts about Gandhiji’s allegations about destroying the beautiful tree of Indian education. He went through several archives and reports of British Government of India. The facts he find were flabbergasting This research also weeds out the myths about education in Dalit’s or Shudras. However in many districts of the Madras and Bengal presidency reports shows that shudra students are learning in large numbers than Brahmins.⁴ British government ordered educational survey between 1822-1825. All 21 Districts collectors were ordered to compile the ground level facts about education in Madras presidency. The prescribed form required from them details about number of school, colleges in the district and the number of male and female scholars in them. The number of scholars, male as well as female, was further to be provided under the categories 1) Brahmin 2) Vaishya 3) Shudras 4) other caste 5) Muslims. Most important thing in this report is shudras are mentioned as a scholars and learners those are considered today as a scheduled Caste.

Table 1⁵

Details of Schools and Colleges					
	school	student	college	Student	Total
Oriya speaking					
Ganjam	255	2977	0	0	2977
Telugu speaking					
Vishakhapatnam	914	9715	0	0	9715
Rajmendry	291	2658	279	1454	4112
Masulipatnam	484	5083	49	199	5282
Guntoor	574	7724	171	939	8663
Nellor	697	7621	0	0	7621
Kadappa	494	6000	0	0	6000
Kannada speaking					
Bellari	510	6641	0	0	6641
Shrirangpattan	41	7268	0	0	7268
Malayalam speaking					
Malabar	759	14153	1	75	14228
Tamil speaking					
North Arcot	630	7326	69	418	7744
South Arcot	875	10523	0	0	10523
Chingalput	508	6845	51	398	7243
Tanjore	884	17582	109	769	18351
Trichanapalli	790	10331	9	131	10462
Madurai	844	10331	0	0	10331
Tinnevelli	607	9377	0	0	9377
Coimbatore	736	8206	173	724	8930
Salem	333	4326	53	324	4650
Madras	322	5699	0	0	5699
	11575	1,57,195	1094	5431	1,62,626

One more myth which was established by the Macaulay's education system in India is Shudras were discarded from their basic rights of education. Even it has been commonly accepted in India that from thousands of year Dalits were not able to even read and write. But the following table and report by the British collectors speaks entire different story.

Table 2

District	Bramhins	Rajah	vaisya	shudra	Other Caste	Muslim	Total
Oriya speaking							
Ganjam	808	----	243	1001	886	27	2965
Telugu speaking							
Vishakhapatnam	4345	103	983	1999	1885	97	9412
Rajmendry	904	----	653	466	546	52	2621
Masulipatnam	1673	18	1108	1506	470	275	5050
Guntoor	3089	----	1578	1923	775	257	7622
Nellore	2466	----	1641	2407	432	617	7563
kadappa	1416	----	1713	1775	647	341	5892
Kannada speaking							
Bellari	1185	----	981	2998	1174	243	6581
Shrirangpattan	48	----	23	298	158	86	613
Malayalam speaking							
Malabar	2230	----	84	3697	2756	3196	11963
Tamil speaking							
North Arcot	698	----	630	4856	538	552	7,274
South Arcot	997	----	370	7938	862	252	10,419
Chengalpattu	858	----	424	4809	452	186	6,729
Tanjore	2817	369	222	10661	2426	933	17,428
Trichnapalli	1198	----	229	7745	329	690	10191
Madurai	1186	----	1119	7247	2977	1147	13676
Tinneveli	2016	----	----	2889	3557	796	9258
Coimbatore	918	----	289	6379	226	312	8124
Salem	459	----	324	1671	1382	432	4268
Madras							
Ordinary school	358	----	789	3506	313	143	5109
Charity school	52	----	46	172	134	10	414
Total	29,721	490	13,449	75,943	22,925	10,644	1,53,172

It has generally been assumed that education of any kind in India, whether in the ancient period or even at the beginning of British rule was mainly concerned with the higher and middle strata of society, and in case of the Hindus it was more or less limited to the twice born. However, as will be seen from the following tabulation

(Table2), the data of 1822-25 indicate a more or less opposite picture. Such an opposite view is the most pronounced in the Tamil speaking areas where the twice born ranged between 13% in south Arcot to some 23% in Madras. The Muslims constitute less than 3% in south Arcot and Chingalput to 10% in Salem, while the Shudras and the other castes ranged from about 75% in Salem and Tinneveli to over 85% in South Arcot. To make above tabulation more easily comprehensible, the caste wise data may be converted into percentage of the whole for each district. The following table 3 is the result of such conversion.

Table 3 Caste wise Division of Male school student ⁶

District	Bramhins	Rajah	vaisya	shudra	Other	Muslims
Oriya speakin	%	%	%	%	%	%
Ganjam	27.25	----	8.25	33.76	29.88	0.91
Talugu speaking						
Vishakhapatnam	46.16	1.09	10.44	21.24	20.03	1.03
Rajmendry	34.49	----	24.91	17.78	20.83	1.98
MAsulipatnam	33.13	0.36	21.94	29.82	9.30	5.44
Guntoor	40.53	----	20.70	25.23	10.17	3.37
Nellore	32.61	----	21.70	31.83	5.71	8.16
Kadapa	24.03	----	29.07	30.13	10.98	5.79
Kannada speaking						
Bellari	18.01	----	14.91	45.56	17.84	3.69
Shirangpattan	7.83	----	3.75	48.61	25.77	14.02
Malayalam Speaking						
Malabar	18.64	----	0.70	30.90.	23.04	26.72
Tamil speaking						
North Arcot	9.60	----	8.66	66.76	7.40	7.59
South Arcot	9.57	----	3.55	76.19	8.27	2.42
Chingalput	12.75	----	6.30	71.47	6.72	2.76
Tanjore	16.16	2.12	1.27	61.17	13.92	5.32
Trichanapalli	11.76	----	2.25	76.00	3.23	6.77
Madurai	8.67	----	8.18	52.99	21.77	8.39
Tinneveli	21.78	----	----	31.21	38.42	8.60
Coimbatore	11.30	----	3.56	78.52	2.78	3.84
Salem	10.75	----	7.59	39.15	32.38	10.12
Madras						
Ordinary school	7.01	----	15.44	68.62	6.13	2.80
Charity school	12.56	----	11.11	41.55	32.37	2.42

In Malayalam speaking Malabar, the proportion of the twice born was still below 20% of the total, but because of larger muslims population the number of Muslim students went up to nearly 27%, while the Shudras and other castes accounted for some 54% of the school going students.

In the largely Kannada speaking Belaari the proportion of the twice born (the Brahmins and vaisya) went up to 33%, while the shudras and other castes still accounted for some 63%

The position in the Oriyaa speaking Ganjam was similar, the twice born accounting for some 35.6% and the shudras and other castes being around 63.5%

It is only in the Telugu speaking districts that the twice born formed the major proportion of the school going students. In them the proportion of Brahmins boys varied from 24% in Kadapa to 46% in Vishakhapatnam, of the Vasyas from 10.5% in Vishakhapatnam to 29% in Kadapa. of the Muslims from 1% Vishakhapatnam to 8% in Nellore and of the shudraas and other castes from 35% in Guntoor to over 41% in Kadapa and Vishakhapatnam

2. SCHOOLS ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE OF TEACHING :

Some of the districts also provided information regarding the language in which education was imparted, and the number of schools where Persian or English were taught. The number of schools teaching English was only 10, the highest being seven in the district of North Arcot. Nellore, North Arcot and Masulipatnam had 50, 40 and 19 Persian schools respectively, while Coimbatore had 10, Rajmundry 5. North Arcot and Coimbatore had schools which taught Grantham as well as teaching Hindi and Bellary had 23 Marathi schools. The district of North Arcot had 365 Tamil and 201 Telugu schools, while Bellary had nearly an equal number of schools teaching Telugu and Kannada.

3. DR G.W LEITNER ON INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN THE PUNJAB. ⁷:

Some 45 years after Adam, Dr. G. W. Leitner, one time principal of Government College, Lahore and for some time acting Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab prepared an even more voluminous survey of indigenous education there. The survey of indigenous education there. The survey is very similar to that of W. Adam; Leitner's language and conclusions however were more direct and much less complementary to British rule. Incidentally, as time passed, the inability of the British rulers to face any criticism grew correspondingly. The British perhaps had really begun to believe in their "divinely ordained" mission in India, and other conquered areas.

At any rate, Leitner's researches showed that at the time of the annexation of the Punjab the lowest computation gave 3,30,000 pupils in the schools of the various denominations who were acquainted with reading, Writing and some method of computation.

The same story is with the education in Bengal and Bihar.⁸ The reports of W. Adam's findings⁹ speak loudly about the same issue.

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5. CONCLUSION :

Such illustrations as above indicate the need of searching records pertaining to the early period of British rule. Even though the statistics of Bombay presidency need to be found out, it is such imperatives which decided Macaulay, Lord Bentinck to deliberately neglect large scale school education. William Wilberforce when he depicted Indians as being deeply sunk and by their religious superstitions fast bound, in the lowest depths of moral and social wretchedness. T.B. Macaulay expressed the same view.

Given table 1, 2 and 3 clearly picture the status of Indian education in British India. Before the Macaulay and his minute. The neglected and uprooting of Indian education, the measures which were employed to this end and its replacement by an alien and rootless system had several consequences for India. It destroyed the Indian social balance in which traditionally, persons from all sections of society appear to have been able to receive an optimum schooling which amongst others, had enabled them to participate openly and appropriately and which ensured participation at the more extended level. It also hurt the personal dignity of those who are now known as scheduled castes. What India had in the sphere of education two centuries ago and the factors which led to its decay and replacement are indeed a part of history.

Most probably the despoliation of this country by Britishers destroyed the beautiful tree of Indian education. Lord Bentinck in his letters wrote to the president of the board of control, Lord Castlereagh,¹⁰ "we have rode the country too hard, and the consequences is that it is in the most lamentable poverty." This leads to the lack of public financial support for Indian indigenous education system. This paper aims to restore the lost social and economic imbalance in the country and also throw light on the Indian education system which was eradicated by imperial rule.

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