

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

FEMALE EDUCATION IN BRITISH INDIA AND SENSITIVITY OF IMPERIAL RULE

Dr. Muhammad Javeed Akhtar¹, M. Tahir Ashraf²

¹ Department of Pakistan Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, 60800 Multan- Pakistan

² Department of International Relations, Bahauddin Zakariya University, 60800 Multan-
Pakistan.

Email: [javidalyana@bzu.edu.pk](mailto:javidsalyana@bzu.edu.pk), tahirmian1@bzu.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammad Javeed Akhtar, M. Tahir Ashraf. Female Education In British India And Sensitivity Of Imperial Rule. Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology 19(3), 873-890. ISSN 1567-214x

Key Words: Oriental Thinking, Paradoxical Construct of British Rule, Patriarchal Society, Educational Discourse, Women Emancipation

ABSTRACT:

British administration in India had its own sensitivity about the prevalent conditions of women subjugation. They realized that plight of Indian women could be addressed by disseminating the ideas of western civilizations through the medium of education. Their approach in this regard was seemingly paradoxical. At one end of the spectrum of their thinking was to emancipate women from the patriarchal barriers and on the other end was to strengthen their rule by not undue interference in the social spheres of Indians life. British authority used education as catalyst and variable of social change in relation to gender development. This article tried to grasp the thinking of British administration in relation to introduction of modernity in colonial India by peeping into the record of nineteenth and twentieth century and used formal education in altering the gender related social roles. This thematic impulse has provided an understanding of the motivations for educating women within the socio-cultural context of colonial India.

*M. Javed Akhtar is Professor in the Department of Pakistan Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, 60800 Multan- Pakistan;

**Tahir Ashraf is Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations, Bahauddin Zakariya University, 60800 Multan- Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Women of colonial India have been discussed by different authors who were groomed in the tradition of western scholarship. Most of them denigrate the culture of orient and relatively seen the subjugation of women under the bar of custom. They held the customary practices as construct of male to allow the patriarchal domination in the society of colonial India. The parameters of occident's to judge the orient were altogether different from the living parameters of orient. This was the difference of educational standards and as well the nature and direction of development in the west. The British xenocentrism had had its own bias in defining the living of Indian people. Their understanding comparatively denigrated Indians as less civilized on the fronts of socio-economic living by which women were accorded less status. The perspective of local activists was similar to that of colonial rulers in describing the plight of women in India and was designated as 'passive being'. By such measuring through the lens of cultural and material development, Indian's woman's status was a blot or stigma on the social evolution which is far behind in attaining the standard of civility. In explaining the orient, the opinion of the Professor Thomas is being referred as "scientific observation and experiment" of the Occident, one of the great things that differentiate Occidental civilization from any of the Oriental civilizations (Thomas, 1908). George Allen Odgers gave his description about not only the state of education in twentieth century India but as well as presented some of the factors which had been the cause of illiteracy. He viewed as

“According to the 1921 census, the number of Indian literates was 19,800,000 males and 2,800,000 females, total 22,600,000. It is generally recognized that India must solve this illiteracy problem before she can have her national education firmly established. This problem, however, is complicated by factors peculiarly Indian. Among them must be included the extreme poverty of the masses, the inadequate means of communication, caste, the purdah, child marriage, child widowhood, the conflict of communal interests and ambitions, and the seemingly unbridgeable chasm between urban and rural life; all of which have operated to prevent the growth of a desire for education among the masses which are largely rural and agricultural” (Odgers, 1925).

Colonial authority in India justified its existence on foreign land in the name of revolutionizing the indigenous patterns of living by introducing the rational sciences through modern education. They had some of their other material motives which they gained with the passage of time in the annexation of different regions of India while extended their administrative mechanism along with the means of communication. The duality of their purpose in colonizing India achieved while parallel to it accommodated the interests of the local. They supported the personal law of Hindu and Muslim community and stroke down some of the rituals which were below the level of human dignity to compromise the individual existence of female gender.

Paradigmatic Stance on Female Gender in British India

Woman in third world is often considered as illiterate, irrational and passive being with no authority to change her lot and even to make her identity. These

aspects of woman's life are often challenged by feminists' thinkers in modern world under the banner of rationality and in the name of emancipation. The epistemic understanding of woman's life in British India needed the blend of modernity and traditionalist views dig out real causes of women's subjugation in colonial India as in nineteenth century the 'women question' loomed large. This was not the question of what do women want but rather how they can be modernized. Some of the British writers' enamored with the 'civilizing mission', attempted to critique ironically indigenous religions, culture and society with regard to women(Forbes, 2004).

In some of the aspects of woman's lives, they had the consensus over some of the norms and values which were practiced through culture and relegated her position in the society *vis-a-vis* man. The plight of woman in the context of colonial India was sometimes reinforced in its routine when personal law was accepted as rightful order to decide the issues of communities. The existence of female gender was honored and sanctified by religious doctrines and by cast differentiations. This further compartmentalized the lives of women in between the public and private spheres. In the colonial context, one sphere of thinking tried to grasp the underlying bases of woman subjugation through the lens of religio-cultural perspectives, and in relation to it, emphatically provided a challenge to these perspectives by seeking the support of rationality as an outcome of enlightenment.

British authority administered India as colony not as a state with the concept of subjects not as citizens. Their design was to rule India with the sense of civility where the rule of law should be prevailed, but on the other hand their administration rested upon the bureaucracy designated by Hamza Alavi as *salariat* in the absence of a large enough private sector (Alavi,2002) and landed aristocracy to firm the bases of its rule. The explanation of this aspect is evident in the discussion of Liddle and Joshi about the status of women in the context of socio-economic dis-equilibrium in British India. They had their views about the British authority which found good excuse in this inequality to justify its rule in India. They exemplified that "British had an interest both in maintaining women's subordination, and in liberalizing it, the former to show that India was not yet fit for self-rule, the latter to confirm Britain's superiority in relation between the sexes (Liddle & Joshi, 1985)."

It was found that British developed the classes in the colonial India and hierarchical nature of social growth which further segmented the social classes, fit for their rule. It further led to emphasize upon the domesticity of woman. Such paradoxical approach was not letting the Indians to decide for their self. Scheme of social change propelled local ideas of those that educate Indians in their own languages, govern them based on British interpretations of traditional law codes, and those who wanted to educate Indians in English and instill British system of law and government (Smith, 2010). Woman's plight in the context of British India accepted their adjunct role in that misogynist approach to get what they were deprived since centuries.

Methodological Approach to Expose the Contesting Idea

The endeavor of this study is qualitative in nature for the explanation and description of the status of women in colonial India. The efforts of British authority to ameliorate the plight of women in India were based on social reformation through the system of education. Much of the evidential record is available in the form of educational reports of the period of the nineteenth century and other secondary sources relevant to this investigation. This part of the study is based on content analysis (discourse analysis) of published material available in the form of official record, written and documented by British administrators.

The questions like that how did the British authority reorient the life of Indian's people? In relation to this different views have been presented by most of the Western and vernacular scholars to understand the issue institutional growth and development in relation to agency of women. For this purpose, secondary sources have been explored to substantiate what has been accrued from the official record.

Western and Vernacular Construct of Indian Life

The section of this study has shed light upon the Western and American scholarship about the life of indigenous people. American author, Katherine Mayo, in her book 'Mother India' attributed India's women subjugation and slave-mentality to the organization of sexuality. The pyramid of the India's women's woes rests upon a rock bottom physical base (Mayo, 1927). In support of her argument she dilated upon the atrocities committed against Indian women, including child marriage and widowhood, premature consummation and pregnancy, female infanticide and *purdah* (Mayo, 1927, p.32).

Some of the scholars variably opined that due to some of the cultural practices like that of early marriage which has negative effect on the growth of child and debilitated their physical and mental growth as well. In that way they remained incapable to defend against the foreign invasions of any kind and form. Engle's had his version in providing the biological basis of Indian's inability to defend against the foreign invasion. He stated that "Age of Consent Bill: premature sexual intercourse was seen to retard the development of body and mind (Engels, 1983, p. 113)."

So the perspective of indigenous culture remained illusory, but a major factor while determining the position of women in India. The other concern of this study is that how far British imperialism justified its rule in altering the social base of women's role and constructing the new by which they were being recognized as equal ones.

Sometimes foreigners refurbished their thinking by taking the cue from the opinion of the locals to justify their claims that they had been right in establishing their rule in India. Forbes in his study mentioned that child marriage created a nation that was an "easy victim under every blessed tyrant

that chose to trample upon them(Forbes, 1982, p.409).” Gerda Lerner an American in the field of women’s history has had her own views about the agency of women that ‘women have a history; women are in history.’ She exposed a new way of thinking about women. She had the stance that instead of accepting feminine identity as natural and essential, historians and other social scientists have treated it as constructed one (Forbes, 1982, p.2).

This shift in thinking took place after the first half of the twentieth century which again tried to recapture those cultural glimpses which were lost under the rubric of modernity. The post-colonial or post-modernity(post-positivism) reincarnated itself under the influence of subjective considerations and social relationships were being understood with the grease of cultural connectivity. In this connection Spivak wrote ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ and Subaltern school focused on all non-elite colonial subjects. Borrowing the term from Antonio Gramsci, Subalterns explicated the interplay of coercion and consent during two hundred years of British rule and uncovered the stories of suppressed peoples. They also paid some attention to women. “The subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow(Spivak, 1988, p. 287).”

In their observation ‘from time to time religious reformers appeared and gained disciples, sometimes from one particular class, sometimes from all sections of the community, but it was seldom that the fervor they evoked was sufficient to break down the growing strength of the social barriers which have squeezed the space for under privileged and Indians though much less tolerant than the European where his beliefs are concerned (Gait, 1913, p. 114).

British power sometimes showed neutrality in its actions towards the social affairs of the native Indians and allowed them to decide their issues in accordance with their own customs and personal law. This sense seemed more practical after the rebellion of 1857 by taking up the imperial rule directly, Queen Victoria assured her imperial subjects that ‘we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects’ (Embree,1992). On the other hand, it could not remain a silent spectator to watch the process of social development for which it introduced its own mechanism of social transformation. In the applying scheme, it relied upon the education, administrative acts and communications means to determine the nature and direction of change. By applying this set of change, they apparently gave the sense of social equality and individual freedom among the cast ridden and gender hierarchal society.

In colonial India, British were sensitive about the social plight of the Indian women and had the urge to get them into their sphere of influence by disseminating the ideas of western civilizations through the medium of education. In the underlying sections, education is being taken as catalyst and variable of social change in relation to gender development. There are some of the questions which are more pertinent to be answered to examine that how far education was responsible in promoting the modernization in colonial India and for what kind of gender roles. It could also check out the prevalent role of ideology of formal education in altering the gender related social roles. This

thematic impulse will also provide an understanding of the motivations for educating women within the socio-cultural context of colonial India.

Education in British India

The early history of education in British India is linked to its conquest and expansion by British. The gradual expansion of its conquest also made the progress of education similar in the areas which came under its domination. Bengal, Madras, Bombay and Punjab were first areas of its experimentation in establishing educational institutions and other parallel state apparatus of colonial nature. Education in India was not a compulsory under any Act, requiring Indian parents to send their children to school. Under such circumstances, it was essential to spread the benefits of education to all classes without any discrimination. Therefore, a long series of year's effort were made to bring education within the reach of all classes of the population and to instill among them an appreciation of its benefits.

This study is taking the review of the state of education in some of the major areas of colonial India viz., Bombay, Bengal and the Punjab to examine that what were the motive of the colonial administration in implanting the education system in India. At first India was under the administrative control of East India Company which had its own motives to run the administration. The percolation of western ideas into social habitat of India was earlier a proselytizing effort of missionaries and later it was effort of British administration to paddle up its utilitarian concerns.

East India Company earlier intended to look after the welfare of Christian employees and their church services were also maintained to keep their missionary zeal intact. In 1659, the Court of Directors of the Company explicitly stated that it was their earnest desire by all possible means to spread Christianity among the people of India and allowed missionaries to embark on their ships (Nurullah & Naik,1951, p.44). The Company under the Charter Act 1698, maintained ministers of religion at their factories in India and for the propagation of religious education, they have been allowed to learn native languages. In this regard, company established St. Mary's Charity school at Madras in 1715. One school was established at Bombay in 1718 and in 1731 another school was established at Calcutta. In 1787, two more charity schools one for boys and other for girls were established at Madras (Nurullah & Naik,1951, p.46).

After the establishment of British rule in India, some of the English intellectuals and administrators like Warren Hastings, William Bentinck, Jonathan Duncan and William Jones were enthusiastic about the living cultural patterns of Indians. The result was the establishment of the Calcutta Madrassah in 1781, Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784, Sanskrit College in 1791 and the starting of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in November 1804. People like Charles Grant, Lord Minto and some Christian missionaries had endeavored to establish English Schools before 1813 (Shodhganga, 1918). He was also admirer of Oriental Literature and felt that its study would be useful to Western nations themselves. In Bengal, a special

enquiry into indigenous education was conducted in 1835-38 under the orders of Lord William Bentinck by William Adam—a missionary who had devoted himself to the cause of Indian education. A similar enquiry was ordered by Mount-Stuart Elphinstone in Bombay in 1823 and in Madras such endeavor was undertaken by Thomas Munro (Nurullah & Naik, 1951, p.46). Here this concern of Indian education was not of primary one, but English administrators after long debate and discussion approved the Anglicist version of promoting occidental views. It was evident in the Charter Act of 1833 in which no clause expressive of philanthropy and altruism in promoting the happiness and interest of the natives of India was inserted. And within two years after passing of Act was the Anglicization of education. The controversy noted by B.D Basu in between two schools known as occidental and orientalist came to a close in 1835 when then governor general of India Lord Bentinck, issued his famous minute by which he Anglicized the educational system of India (Basu, p.51). Lord Bentinck remarks quoted as would reflect the thoughts of English administrators in disseminating the education to Indians only for their purpose of cajoling local people to their purpose of effective rule in occupied areas of India without prioritizing the needs of the natives. In the resolution of 7th March 1835 he said that “all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone’[and] that no stipend should be given to any student that may hereafter enter at any of these(oriental) institutions....(Leitner, 2002, p.22).”

Vernacular System of Education

India passed through different phases of history of occupation under different dynastic rule which introduced its own pattern of social and moral development. Different civilization sprung which took the credit to make the inhabitants of India aware of their religio-mythical knowledge, sufficient to organize the social life. Nature of education was moralistic which had been supported by affluent segment of the society. The two powerful communities of India, Muslim and Hindu, remained conscious about their religious differences, poured efforts to establish their separate educational institutions. In Bengal leisured class of Hindus established Sanskrit schools known as *Tols* and opulent Muslims gave their support to Persian and Arabic school known as *Madrassah* (Poromesh, 1978, p.1981). In these schools students have not to bear any expenses but to spend a long time about 12 years to complete their courses of studies. The courses of studies usually offered by the Sanskrit schools comprised Hindu law, logic and literature, viz, *smriti*, *Nyaya*, *Kabya*, and *Alankar*. While the Persian and Arabic schools offered mainly courses of Muslim law and Islamic religious science, i.e., the *Quran*, the *Tafsir*, the *Hadith*, and the *fiqh*. Persian schools also included in their courses some literary and historical works like *Pandnameh*, *Amendnamedh*, *Gulistan*, ‘Joseph and Juleikha’, ‘Scandernameh’, and ‘Abu Fazal’ etc (Poromesh, 1978, p.1981). These schools were only for religious and learned classes while parallel to it were the institutions of *Pathsala* and *Maktab* which rendered education without any class and caste difference but patronized under trading and agricultural classes. The exposure and orientation of education in *Pathsalas* and *Maktab*s were in contrast as *Pathsalas* provided secular

education while the latter were focusing upon the religious content of the education.

Female Education in British India

In India, during First World War in 1916-17, a tabulated data was arranged on the education by government of India itself. As the priority of female education was seemingly contingent upon the level of acceptance by the community, so the British was not very positive in making any speedy headway in this domain. Therefore, the level of females in attending the educational institutions at different levels was comparatively low as compare to opposite sex. The numbers of institutions at secondary and primary levels in relation to both sexes were also comparatively low for females. Secondary schools of all nature for boys were 7004 and for females were 689 in 1916-17; while primary schools for boys were 124081 and for females were 18122 in 1916-17 (Sharp, 1919, p.38). The statistics of primary, upper primary and lower primary have showed this stark contrast in between both sexes to attend the formal and informal level of education. In below given table females were to attend the boys' schools as part of co-education where the resistance on the part of parents is very much evident while this table is not segregating data further on the basis of communal divide in India.

Secondary schools		Upper Primary		Lower Primary Stage				Total Primary	
		Males	Females	Reading Printed Books		Not-Reading Printed Books		Males	Females
				Males	Females	Males	Females		
Government	English	13129	68	5732	95	268	4	19129	167
	Vernacular	2058	138	3322	623	743	7	6123	768
Local Fund	English	10136	49	10178	201	513	7	20827	257
	Vernacular	16942	98	39130	496	9041	272	65113	866
Municipal Fund	English	5986	2	6123	51	135	4	12244	57
	Vernacular	1293	...	3730	2	995	...	6018	2
Aided	English	95459	1314	97594	3021	6062	224	199115	4559
	Vernacular	18588	3408	46701	19055	3782	61	69071	22524
Un-Aided	English	51596	73	48262	332	4618	55	104476	460
	Vernacular	639	3	1163	3	500	9	2302	15
Total		215826	5153	261935	23879	26657	643	504418	29675

Source: H. Sharp, Progress of Education in India 1912-17, Vol. ii, Calcutta, India, 1919, p.40.

The British government was interested to promote secular education in India without displacing the vernacular system. For this purpose, the Indian education commission in 1882 presented a report on education, and in response to discussion on report, it was decided that a practice should be started to prepare quinquennial reviews, dealing with the progress of education

in India. In the underlying table it is manifested that pace of development in relation to male educational infrastructure was better as compare to female education. There was the difference in expenditures on male and female educational infrastructure which has showed that British authority was not steeping ahead of indigenious thinking in providing the educational setup for males and females.

High & Middle Schools

Area	Year 1911-12	Year 1916-17		
Madras	375	377		
Bombay	480	388		
Bengal	1733	2317		
Punjab	194	271		

The authority was not unmindful of the context of customary practices Indian women while taking up the task of changing their social status. It was observed that the colonial mind was not very enthusiastic in reforming their society, as they had set standards in their own homeland. They wanted to introduce some new developments, but the impact of those changes was not controlled by them deliberately, particularly in relation to female education. The report tried to capture the response of the Indian mind in accepting education as a means to material benefits only for boys. R. Nathan, in the report on the education of India, stated that ‘it is well known that the diffusion of female education in India is attended by peculiar difficulties....the strong incentive of material gain which has done so much to further the education of the boys of India does not operate in the case of girls....(Nathan, 1904, p.298). But at the same time the authority remained reluctant in altering the attitudinal reservations of both Hindus and Muslims in making their adjustment with new development. The report of Orientalist R. Nathan itself observed the practiced customs which have not allowed women to accept the public role:

“Strict seclusion of girls from an early age which is practiced by both Hindus and Muhammadans forms an obstacle to the instruction of girls in public schools beyond a very elementary stage which it has not yet been possible to overcome. ...and Indian parents display general apathy with regard to the education of their daughters.... The government in the Despatch of 1854 directed that female education should receive the frank and cordial support [], as by this means a far greater proportional impulse is imparted to the educational and moral tone of the people than by the education of the men... (Nathan, 1904, p.298).”

The factual description of female education at college level was abysmal that signaled the situation of unresponsiveness by the Indian themselves. It might have been as well the stigma on the effectiveness of the government efforts to boost it up in the period on nineteenth century. The report of Nathan has very eloquently presented this situation while given the data ‘...at the end of 1901-02, there were 177 female college students as compared to 87 in 1896-97 and 45 in 1891-92’. They were distributed by provinces:

Provinces	1901-02	1896-97
Madras	35	16
Bombay	30	18
Bengal	55	33
United Provinces	49	15
Burma	08	05

Source: R. Nathan, *Progress of Education in India 1897-98—1901-02*, Calcutta, India, 1904, p.299.

There were people within the British government like Bentick, Wood, who were interested to promote secular education in India without displacing the vernacular system. For this purpose, the Indian education commission presented a report on education in 1882. In response to discussions on the report, it was decided that a practice should be started to prepare quinquennial reviews on the progress of education in India. The quinquennial review of 1897-98 to 1901-02 expressed the difficulties in the diffusion of female education in India. The British authority itself had created segregation within the cast-ridden society by adopting the policy of filtration, which was heavily criticized by Samya Prasad: “Through filtration theory, new education was confined to the upper classes and was to filter down in time to the masses. Thus it came about that education of the masses was left unheeded, the attention of the government [] riveted on the education of the handful of men [*neglecting female education*] (Mookerjee, 1944, p.31).”

British emphasized upon the education of both gender but they were not satisfied with the existing apparatus for disseminating the education which was considerable very low as compared to Europe. As Thomas Munro gave his description about **Madras education** in a Minute, dated 25th June 1822 that “state of education here exhibited, low as it is compared with that of our own country, is higher that it was in most European countries at no very distant period (Mookerjee, 1944, p.6).”

These missionaries and administrators had their own perception while not very away from the existing situation. Social context of female education was not very supportive among Hindu and Muslim community. Munro noted that in Madras some of the districts were very conservative and class conscious in promoting the education. He observed that “...women of the Brahmans and of Hindus in general they are unknown, because the knowledge of them is prohibited and regarded as unbecoming the modesty of the sex and fit only for public dancers...(Mookerjee, 1944, p.4).” It has also been observed that still British authority was resistant in expanding the bases of educational infrastructure for both sexes. In the presidency of madras which was consisted of 12,850,941 people in 1822 has had 12498 educational institutions; so that there was one school to every 1000 of the population; but as only a very few females were taught in school.

It is generally believed that in the early period of nineteenth century, colonial India was in the middle of the path of shifting to formal school education. So

most of the families were hiring the tutors at home for their boys and girls were still to be induced with religious education to make them more modest, loyal and symbol of honour. This state of conservatism was indicated by Munro that even society was not ready to send their boys to attend the schools and how it was possible for them to break the traditions in relation to sending their girls to attend the school outside their homes. He observed that even ratio of boys to attend the school in age between five to ten years was one-ninth and practice of being taught at home by their relations or private teachers was frequent in any part of the country (Mookerjee, 1944, p.5).

The situation in Bombay was identical to Madras in setting up the educational system in India by colonial authority. But the efforts of other missionaries were also the contributing factor in laying down the foundation of education which was the blend of rational sciences and of religious Gospels. In 1814 the American Mission had opened its first school in Bombay. The London mission and the church missionary society commenced their labours in 1820, and two years later the Scottish Mission was working in the same field of benevolence (Report of the Bombay Provincial Committee, Education Commission Bombay, 1884, p.1). The American Mission at Bombay opened native schools for boys and girls respectively in 1814 and 1824. So the Mission had the due credit of being the pioneer of female education. After the period of two years, nine girls' schools with an aggregate attendance of 340 pupils were in operation (Report of the Bombay Provincial Committee, Education Commission Bombay, 1884, p.3). Under the Scottish society, in 1820-30, Dr and Mrs. Wilson established in Bombay six schools for girls. The number of pupils in them rose to 200. In the year 1826, the Church Missionary society opened first school for girls and in the course of next ten years, it opened separate elementary schools for boys and girls. The ratio of boys and girls in attending the school was indicating of resistance on the part of parents to send their girls with free will to schools. The girls' school contained in 1835 no less than 75 children while boys' school contained 299 pupils (Report of the Bombay Provincial Committee, Education Commission Bombay, 1884, p.4).

The government of the day was interested to spread this said cause for developing the compatibility between different ideologues and ideology for the smooth functioning of their rule and as well to fulfill the desire of making Indians civilized as they are themselves. In connection to it, the remarks of Charles Grant (1746-1823) are very appropriate to understand the Indians as social being of that time. He observed during his stay in India the 'decadent condition of Indian society and had become firmly convinced that nothing but the spread of Western 'light and knowledge' could save the Indian people. For this purpose, government patronized the education by sanctioning some funds for the promotion of this cause. In 1840 Board of Education under the guiding spirit of Sir E. Perry disassociated the higher education from the missionary enterprise and advocated the theory of filtration downwards (Nurullah & Naik, 1951, p.58).

Still there was no priority for female education in the office of the Board of Education which had been replaced in 1855 by the Department of Public

Instruction. This kind of enterprise did not let the government to establish the separate institutions for boys and girls which further made the parents more conventional and reserved in their approach to not allow their daughters to be the attendee with boys in the same institutions. The posing of the difference between enlightened rationality and ignorant and bigoted superstition was essential for science to become a justification for social reform. Yet the fact that this difference was implicated in the political relations between colonizer and colonized meant that the purported culture of rationality could never be allowed wholly to replace that of indigenous tradition, since the erasure of all difference is also the erasure of identity.

In 1844 Lord Harding announced government preference for educated Indians in jobs. In the same vein Lord Dalhousie declared that no single change was likely to produce more important and beneficial consequences than female education. Sir Charles Wood, president of the Board of Control from 1853-55, issued an education Despatch which focused on a total system of education for both sexes. The despatch revealed the importance of female education in India and it has been observed with pleasure that many of the natives to give a good education to their daughters. In the second half of the 19th century female education had been one of the most significant trends of 'New Education Policy'. Prior to the receipt of the dispatch of 1854 from the Court of Directors, female education was not recognized as a branch of the state system of education India (Sarwar, 2012, p.38).

Education in Punjab, became a province of British Empire in 1849, the task of educating the masses was taken in hand by the government. The territory of the Delhi was brought under the administration of the Punjab government after the mutiny but before this event, an Oriental College was established in 1792 (Education Commission Report, 1884, p.1). So the province was exposed to the system of education. After the advent of British, W.D. Arnold was appointed first Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab in 1856. Prior to him, government had collected statistics of indigenous schools in which large preponderance was of Muhammadan boys and as well attended by Hindus also. By far the schools were imparting religious education along with vernacular knowledge. These, and schools in which the elements of *Banias*' accounts were taught, Mr. Arnold thought fit to exclude from the statistics as being incapable of development (Education Commission Report, 1884, p.2). British after getting foothold in the Punjab turned their attention to the settlement of land by which they entrenched the class system in India parallel to caste system. Leitner in his report on education of Punjab, presented in 1882, indicated parents biases, particularly of landed gentry to male education, which was gradually shaken under the system of modern education. As he remarked that "turning now to the landed gentry, the petty chiefs, and the *Raises* generally, their greater wealth and family pride enabled them either to dispense with education for their sons, or else to provide tutors for them...with this view they asked Lord Canning for a college at Lahore, intending it to be reserved for their sons (Leitner, 2002, p.4)." Despite such efforts, female education was as such not priority in policy of the government. Mr. Arnold and other government officials proposed to leave the question of female education in abeyance. By the close of the year 1856-57, number of schools

had been opened for female education and these schools were attended by 300 scholars, nearly all of whom were Muhammadans. Mr. Arnold believed that 'these schools were genuine, but had no idea of continuing the experiment if it should appear that a considerable sum of money was spent with no result but that of teaching little Muhammadan girls to recite the Quran....' (Leitner, 2002, p.4). After Mr. Arnold, Lieutenant Paske was in-charge of this enterprise in 1860 and later he was also succeeded by A.R. Fuller. All had the view that indigenous system of education having no prospect of advancement and teachers were not interested to learn the new sciences to deliver them to their students but instead they leaned upon time-worn practices of teaching. As it was observed that "moreover in contravention of the neutrality principle upon which the operations of the department are based, these schools became, in too many instances, of a religious character(Leitner, 2002, p.6)." Further they had their views that '[teachers] were appointed in direct opposition to the rules of the Department...whose fanatic character rendered them unsuitable as secular teachers (Leitner, 2002, p.7).

British Administrators were anxious for the extension of education facilities for females but not worried about the content which had to change their mind make –up in absorbing the new ideas. So the priority of the parents was also in getting the education just to know about the religious application of some beliefs and their social codes. In the period between 1861-1866, the number of girls schools increased from 52 to 1029 (Leitner, 2002, p.9). In 1862, a grand Educational *Darbar* was held at Lahore, under the presidency of Sir R. Montgomery, the Lieutenant-Governor, who impressed upon the Europeans and natives to present the importance, attached to the education of women. A year later his remarks about the people were similar as given by orientalists. He stated that 'a great movement of vast importance to the moral and intellectual welfare of the inhabitants of the Punjab had been begun, and that the prejudices of centuries were being overcome' (Leitner, 2002, p.10). While Punjabi parents had their no concern for the betterment of their female children in getting them admitted into the schools. They only considered it sharing of burden of upbringing in utilizing the time-division. As the Punjab Education Commission Report mentioned 'women who work out of doors [were] glad to send their young children at all times to be taken care of' (Leitner, 2002, p.11).

In the report of 1875-76, neither a single scholarship was awarded to girls in higher education but similar support was given to boys which manifested the patriarchal concerns of the administrators rather than materialize the ideas of equality in the context of India. In that year Lieutenant-Governor observed that a certain amount of instruction was given to a considerable number of girls, but that little progress was reported. He further stated that native society does not approve the education of adult daughters of good families. Even to go out to work as female teachers. Consequently, the students [were] mostly of low caste... and no great development of female education [was] possible(Leitner, 2002, p.25). Education inspectors expressed their views in similar vein about the female education for 1901-02 which counted factors of attitudinal and administrative nature. The Inspectors remarked that

“progress may appear slow, but there is real advance. The Christian community has largely increased their schools, though they are apart from the people generally. In Lahore, Amritsar, Sialkot and Gujranwala they form centres of intelligence and knowledge, each with groups of educated women. Isolated schools and branch schools are less satisfactory. The teachers miss the companionship and supervision they need and become discouraged. One of the most important reasons for the lack of interest taken in girls’ education is that ‘the reading books in use, which are almost confined to natural history and science, do not seem to the people to have any bearing on religion and morals (Nathan, 1904, p.311).”

Further the system of modern education and medium of instruction retarded female education and stops the former supply of female teachers trained in their own families’ (Leitner, 2002, p.2). Even that government in middle of nineteenth century did not bother to increase the number of female educational institutions in comparison to male institutions. Below given tables are reflecting the number of schools for both gender and as well as has showed their numbers as scholars.

Number of Schools for both Gender

Schools	1860-61	1880-81
Primary schools for boys	1696	1524
Primary schools for girls	40	323

Source: History of education in the Punjab by G.W. Leitner,1882, p.6.

Number of Scholars in Schools

Scholars	1860-61	1880-81
Boys in Primary Schools	35957	94396
Girls in Primary Schools	872	9695

Source: History of education in the Punjab by G.W. Leitner,1882,p.6.

Education in Bengal between the period of 1857 to 1st World War an exemplary literary work was produced by the women who have been educated either at homes or at formal schools. Geraldine Forbes recorded that ‘it is impossible to enumerate, let alone locate, all the literature from this period (c.1850-World War 1) but we know that in Bengal women produced almost 400 literary works, ranging from poetry to novels and autobiography, and twenty-one journals (Forbes, 1982, p.29). This evidence reflected the share of women in cultural and literary life of Bengal but still they were facing the challenges and obstacles in acquiring modern education. Those obstacles were identified by the director of public instruction of Bengal for the period 1899-00 and 1901-02. He enumerated some of the causes as:

“the conservatism of a great portion of the people; the fact that the education of their female children is matter of great indifference to a large proportion of parents and guardians as they usually do not take the same amount of care and interest in the education of their female wards as they do in that of boys; the system of early marriage which presents an almost insurmountable barrier to education beyond the primary stages; the want of educated female teachers; the want of a system for educating zanana (ladies) and the want of adequate state aid and aid from the other public funds (Nathan, 1904, p.310).”

The education report prepared by the Bengal provincial committee in 1884 showed that the colonial authority initially was not serious about educating Indians except for their own timely requirement of erecting the empire on strong foundations. The report mentioned “[T]hose days the modern view of the duty of the government, as regards the education of the people, had not commended itself to the national mind of the English men; and accordingly the body of English merchants, trading to this country and acquiring rights over its revenue, did not interest themselves in the education of foreign people coming under their supremacy (Education Commission Report, 1884, p.3).” It is important to mention here that provision of English education to the natives was meant to prepare them for public service, diffuse European knowledge, and elevate the moral and intellectual tone of the people whom the British considered as inferior to them. The other side of their rule was not to assign a serious attention to provide education to whole Indian people without any gender discrimination. This aspect of their public act was evident by the subscription of less amount on education as compared to other heads. Of the total expenditure £58178563 for public works in 1877-78, £15792112 were spent on the army; £2158032 on police; £3519668 on ordinary public works; £3275821 on law and justice; more than £7000000 on the collection of revenue; and only £730013 on the entire education of about 200,000,000 people (Education Commission Report, 1884, p.58).

The British authority in India was behaving like orientalist in making the Indians inferior to them in terms of knowledge and other aspects of living. The observance of codes in government offices and in judicial courts for Indians was different from what was recommended for Europeans. The English were not to tried in court presided by Indian judicial staff. The educational Despatch of 1859 configured the sketch of Indian’s lives as recipients of charity flowing from the ends of authority. It was stated that “in the darkest days of the mutiny [government] had not receded a single step from the sacred duty it had undertaken ‘of conferring upon the natives of India those vast moral and material blessings which flow the general diffusion of useful knowledge (Education Commission Report, 1884, p.23).” Similar views were given by H.L. Harrison, the magistrate of Midnapore, whose influence on primary education was felt. His scheme in 1880s emphasized the element of education among the Indians. He is famous for saying that they should feel exalted compared to those who were devoid of such blessings. He stated, “It is because education is so rare that all educated youths think they should rise above their proper level. If we succeed in making education more general,

they will find that they can no longer expect thus to rise (Education Commission Report, 1884, p.42-43).”

CONCLUSION

Imperial authority in India was sensitive to educate Indians but their design of imparting western education could not come to fruition without cooperation and support of the local community. It had been found that there was complete gap between what was accepted by the Imperial authority for itself and what was practiced for Indians. A review of the British project to educate Indians during colonial rule reveals that imperial authority did not intend to change the prevailing customs of the Indian people that led to subjugation of women; rather, supported their own project of building a male elite class to further British rule and to appease different local powers which further placed women under the whims of patriarchy. The steady growth of educational institutions under British rule therefore prioritized male education in attaining Western values and this primacy established the norm of male dominance in colonial India. Society of India which first interacted with British system also took century in getting taken off. The system of education developed by the imperial authority was also seemingly not very responsive and keen to make Indian women equal to Indian men. This is evident in the slow pace of women's level of education after the Despatch of 1854. The report of Nathan since the Despatch of 1854 indicated that ‘[N]umber of girl pupils has risen greatly, but still only seven females in one thousand can, on an average, read and write. It was found that British paradigm of authority utilized the tool of education to make one section of Indian society agreeable to accept the process of change and the authority of the ruler at the expense of neglecting other. The tool of education did not succeed in radically changing the social definition of gender roles in colonial India, but it increased gender sensitivity more in urban centers rather than in the periphery.

From the above discussion it can be inferred that the British project of education in India did have the mandate to promote modern attitudes and parallel to it traditional values were supported which in turn facilitated the process of social awareness. The role of women in colonial India was an extension of their traditional roles in the majority of cases.

It has been found that imperial authority perceived the role of women in the colonial India as being cultural icons. Women were presented as the wielders of power at the domestic level but they were not seen as operators of power outside their homes. The British authority in India considered education only as a tool that could furnish and embellish Indian society with new ideas that could facilitate in grasping the new roles for women but that was to be passive in its outlook. A further complication is that Indian women themselves were not ready to challenge the existing hierarchical structures of their society. This reflects that the gradual mode of educating women in India was not a deliberate agenda of the British government in India, but only a means to realize their own utilitarian and pragmatic designs to expand British rule in India.

REFERENCES

- Acharya, Poromesh (1978). Indigenous vernacular Education in Pre-British Era: Traditions and Problems, *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol.3, No.48, pp.1981-1988
- Alavi, Hamza. (2002). Social Forces and Ideology in the Making of Pakistan, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 51, p.5120, pp. 5119-5124.
- Basu, B.D. History of Education in India under the Rule of East India Company, The Modern Review Office Calcutta, p.51.
- Education Commission Report, The Punjab Provincial Committee. (1884). Calcutta: Government Printing, India.
- Education Commission Report, The Bengal Provincial Committee. (1884). Calcutta: Government Printing India.
- Embree, Ainslie T. (1992). Christianity and the state in Victorian India: Confrontation and Collaboration, In *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society: Essays in Honor of R.K. Webb*, Eds., R.W. Davis & R.J. Helstadter, Routledge: London, pp.151-152.
- Engles, Dagmer. (1983). The Age of Consent Act of 1891: Colonial Ideology in Bengal, *South Asian Research*,3(2), p.113,107-125.
- Forbes, Geraldine. (1982). Women and Modernity: The Issue of Child Marriage in India, *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, 2(4), p.409, 407-419.
- _____. (2004). Women in Modern India' In *The New Cambridge History of India*, Cambridge University Press: New York, p.12.
- Gait, E.A. (1913). *Census of India, 1911*, Vol.1, Government Printing Calcutta, India, p.114.
- Nurullah, Syed. & Naik, J.P. (1951). *History of Education in India during the British Period*, Macmillan: Bombay, p.44.
- Leitner, G.W. (2002). *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab*, Sang-e-Meel, Lahore, p.22.
- Liddle, Joanna & Joshi, Rama. (1985). Gender and Imperialism in British India, *Economic and Political Weekly*,20(43), p.73,72-78.
- Mayo, Katherine. (1927). *Mother India*, Harcourt Brace: New York, p.22.
- Mookerjee, Syma Parasad. (1944). Education in British India, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol.233, p.31,30-38.
- Nathan, R. (1904). *Progress of Education in India 1897-98—1901-02*, Vol. I, Government Printing India, Calcutta, p.298.
- Odgers, George Allen. (1925). *Education in British India*, The Phi Delta Kappan, vol.8 (2), p.2, pp.1-6.
- Report of the Bombay Provincial Committee, Education Commission Bombay. (1884). Calcutta: Government Printing India.
- Sarwar, Firoj High. (2012). Christian Missionaries and Female Education in Bengal during East India Company's Rule: A Discourse between Christianized Colonial Domination versus Women Emancipation, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4. No.1. 37-47.
- Sharp, H. (1919). *Progress of Education in India 1912-17*, Vol. II, Calcutta, India, p.38.
- Shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bit stream/10603/1918/8/08_chapter-3. p.41.

- Smith. (2010). Ladies and Females: Women's Missionaries and Educational Work in Nineteenth Century India, Thesis Seminar, p.4.
- Spivak, G. Chakravorty. (1988). 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Eds., Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press: Urbana and Chicago, p.287.
- Thomas, William. (1908). The Significance of the Orient for the Occident, *American Journal of Sociology*, 13 (6), p.751,729-755.