Conclusion

Colonialism brought marked changes in the socio-economic structures of Indian subcontinent. Its impact on education system is crucial as the latter acted as a driving force behind the various lasting changes that colonial Indian witnessed. Although the literacy rate of India has jumped from 18.33% in 1951 to 74.04 in 2011, India is still below the world’s average literacy rate by around 10%. India’s state expenditure on education is only 3.17% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is also below world’s average expenditure on education.¹

There are innumerable challenges which the Indian education system is facing in the contemporary times. These challenges have been inherited from colonial educational policies of 19th century. Therefore, in this study, we started with an overview on colonial system of education wherein we found that new education system was confined to a few. So, when we look at the current situation of education, the condition does not appear different. Even after the enactment of the Right to Education Act, which made education a fundamental right and put the onus of educating children on the State, there are 8.1 million children who continue to remain out of school and there are country-wide vacancies of more than five lakh teachers under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2013.² Lack of a systematic professional and technical education, gender discrimination in education, insufficient and inefficient manpower and similar other problems which have been inherited from the colonial masters continue to affect the Indian education system.

Diverting to the princely India, which was controlled indirectly, the situation of education was not good, although with few exceptions.³ Kashmir, which was ruled by the autocratic Dogra rulers, did not see the ray of modern education until the advent of Christian missionaries on the scene in the 1880s. Early Maharajas, especially Maharaja Ranbir Singh, promoted classical learning, particularly Sanskrit teaching, as Chapter II


² Ibid.

³ The princely sates of Mysore and Baroda were the model states as for their modern structures are concerned in fact, they have given a tough chase to the colonial modernity, as Bhagavan has called it ‘Native Modernity’. Manu Bhagavan, Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 70-71.
revealed. This was just to maintain the hierarchy of the patron-client relationship between guru and the Raja as elaborated in Chapter II.

Due to the strategic importance of Kashmir, British intervened actively in the internal affairs of the state, albeit against the agreement. In 1885, British Resident was appointed in Srinagar. Later Maharaja Pratap Singh was deposed from the throne, leaving all the affairs in the hands of a Council of Minsters under the control of Resident.

Thus, it was during the last decade of the 19th century that the educational system of Kashmir underwent a dramatic change due to the role of Council of State coupled with strenuous efforts of Christian missionaries. Education became a central component of the State’s drive towards centralisation and bureaucratization along the lines of British India. The model selected for the education system in Kashmir was of neighbouring Punjab. Therefore, as found in Chapter III, the policy of education was inspired by the colonial principles, which was based on the downward filtration theory. The bureaucracy, which was imported from the Punjab and Bengal, refused to extend education beyond some elite classes; they erroneously presumed that extension of education to poor masses would not be welcomed. The government also refused to educate the lower castes like Megas, Dooms and Hanjis alongside the upper classes, arguing that the later will not bear to be with their inferiors.

The state did not intend to keep lower classes uneducated, however. It was interested in imparting to them a different type of education. The education system of any society is shaped not only by its needs at a particular point in time, but also by larger historical events and processes. The system is often made subservient to the needs and demands of the ruling classes in any historical period. Thus, state wanted to introduce education system which would improve the productive capacity and occupational skills of the poor masses. This was possible only if technical education was imparted to the agriculturists and artisans with a view to making them more efficient in their respective occupations. Consequently, technical institutes were established in different parts of state. The trades introduced in these institutes were causal in nature. Moreover, these institutes were not popular among the masses because the training infrastructure and personnel were not efficient. Thus the major aim of these institutions was to make the students more

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4 According to the treaty of Amritsar (1846), British were not supposed to interfere in the internal affairs of the state. K. M. Panikkar, *Gulab Singh (1792-1858), Founder of Kashmir*, Srinagar: (Reprint) City Book Centre, 2008.
manual labours than the skilled professionals. In the similar vein, rudimentary agriculture education was introduced in village schools to make the pupils familiar with the agricultural practices.

Higher education was altogether neglected; it was only in 1905 that some Kashmiri Pundits, with the support of Anne Besant, were able to lay the foundation of a college. But, the apprehensions of the colonial government and the Curzon’s higher education policy forced the State Council to take over the college under its own control. The lone college in valley with insufficient infrastructure and inefficient staff was not able to fulfil the needs of higher education in the Valley.

In 1916, there was direct involvement of Government of India when Mr H. Sharp, Educational Commissioner of the Government of India, was appointed to look into the fragile system of education in Kashmir. In a colonial rhetoric, he stated that due to agro-based economy of Kashmir, modern curriculum had no value for them. Sharp went beyond the state in delving into the reasons for the low educational status among Kashmiris in general and Kashmiri Muslims in particular. Maintaining the colonial focus on class, the report pointed out that poverty and the agricultural basis of Kashmiri Muslims was the reason for the lack of literacy among them. Therefore, he also recommended institutionalisation of technical education in state. Sharp does much to valorise the category of religious community in the state organisation of education. The period from 1880s to 1925 saw a lot of changes in education system. It was due to the colonial intervention that this system was streamlined. But, it may not be out of place to mention here that the intervention of the colonial state was politically motivated which benefited the Valley to some extent.

Maharaja Hari Singh, the successor of Pratap Singh, came out with certain reforms in the state education system. Much applauded step in this direction was the legislation of free and compulsory primary education to be introduced in certain specific areas. Although extraordinary in relative terms, this step was based on class and gender prejudice, excluding lower castes and girls in its plan. In fact, its aim was to educate the urban elite of cities and towns, leaving all marginalised sections of both urban and rural areas including girl students. Although numerically educational facilities increased during this period, there were innumerable problems which the system faced. Problems like wastage and stagnation, unavailability of teachers’ training, conjunction in schools, lack
Conclusion

of systematic inspection, etc., did not allow the normal literacy to develop. Even in 1939, there was only one training institute in the whole of the state, giving poor quality of the training to the admitted teachers. The low salary of teachers, a colonial principle, ensured that school jobs would not attract the kind of young men who might consciously work to develop a pedagogic creed to the changing socio-economic milieu. On one hand, teachers’ status was degraded and on the other their supremacy over students was maintained which made students more feeble beings without any creative thought. The lack of proper inspection made several schools directionless in imparting quality education. Comparing expenditure on social sectors like education, the state of Kashmir was lagging behind among the other Indian States.

The appointment of the Education Reorganization Committee in 1939 was an important development in the annals of educational history of Kashmir. The Committee, for the first time, investigated the complex problems of school education like problem of inspection, pay anomaly of teachers, problem of teacher training and so on. But, the Committee basically laid stress on the manual labour and made students more attractive to craftsmanship rather than to the academics. The Committee, in the beginning, declared: “In preparing the syllabus, it should be presumed that about half of the time during the teaching hours would be given to academic teaching and half the time to craft work.”

The framing of the Committee was actually the offshoot of the Wardha Scheme of education propounded by Mahatma Gandhi; nonetheless, the Committee thoroughly examined the feeble system of education in Kashmir.

The indifference of Muslims to secular education system has been debatable. The conventional view that Muslims were averse to modern education because of religious conservatism has been challenged. Looking in the context of Kashmiri Muslims of Dogra period, one gets the same impressions that inform most of our scholarship. However, the condition of Muslims, except a few, had been deplorable due to their acute poverty and exploitative policies of Dogra Maharajas, which did not allow them to receive education, and even religious education. There is no denying of the fact that Muslim clergy also discouraged their community towards English education. But State policies also played no less important role in the backwardness of Muslims in education. In fact, the state did not take the responsibility to educate their masses in a serious manner; different

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recommendations of the appointed committees were not implemented properly. Regretting the negligence of state on the recommendations of the Sharp Commission, the Glancy Commission declared, ‘It is a frequent cause of complaint that Sharp’s recommendations have not been given publicity and have been to a great extent ignored.’

Towards the end of Pratap Singh’s reign, a class of Muslim elite, under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, emerged which clearly framed its demands and pressurized the government for reforms. The decade of 1930s gave a push to the Muslims political awakening. As a result, the Muslim Conference, later rechristened as National Conference, emerged as the sole representative of Muslims, which politicized the discourse of education. The leaders stressed upon the government to realize its responsibility of promoting education among its subjects. No doubt, it was more a leadership rhetoric; however, it had immense impact on the education of Muslims. As statistical analysis depicts in Chapter–V, that there was a considerable increase in the number of Muslim students in the state and aided schools.

National Conference’s close contact with Indian National Congress made Dogra state apprehensive as Kashmir politics took anti-British stance, made National Conference politically more important. National Conference came with a definite plan what is called the ‘Naya Kashmir Manifesto’ which declares that, “Jammu and Kashmir National Conference stands for an active and progressive policy of education which may carry the height of knowledge to the farthest and most backward areas of state.” It was only a tall claim because after coming to power, National Conference did not follow policies different from that of the Dogra Raj.

One more important variable which has correlation with education was employment. At the earlier stage, Kashmiris, irrespective of their communities, were ignored in the state services, the whole bureaucracy being imported from the British Indian states. Later, some Kashmiri Pandits were appointed in clerical positions. In order to secure their rights, a movement known as “Kashmir for Kashmiris” was organized by Kashmiri Pandits who formed the bulk of educated population. After a number of

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committees appointed by the government, the situation was ameliorated to a certain extent. However, it did not make any difference to Kashmiri Muslims, who have been totally ignored in state services from the very inception.

Glancy Commission made it clear to the government that, in the matter of state employment, Muslims, who form the majority of the population, are inadequately represented. It pointed out that “inspite of imperfections in the matter of educational facilities, a large number of qualified Muslims are in fact available.” Thus, the underrepresentation of Muslims in state services did not support the causes of their being backward in education in general and higher education in particular.

Since the colonial state was the Dogra state’s main inspiration, the ambiguities and inconsistencies in British Education and language policies could also be noted in Kashmir. Urdu, the least spoken language, was made medium of instruction which affected the expansion of education to a large extent. Even if the government knew the agony the children were facing while getting instruction in a language other than their mother tongue, still it pressed for it for its administrative convenience. Instead of developing the regional tongue, the Dogra state boosted up Urdu as it treated Urdu synonymous with Muslim education and Hindi with the education of Hindus, developing parallel system of “vernacular” education, such as in North Western Provinces, ignoring the glaring fact that neither Kashmiri Hindus nor Kashmiri Muslims spoke anything other than their regional vernacular, Kashmiri, in either their homes or places of business. Surprisingly, the Kashmiri leadership, both Hindu and Muslim, did not support the cause of Kashmiri because of their vested interests.

In the 1940s, government made the problem more complex by introducing a dual script of Devangri and Persian. Thus government was able to play the communal card which weakened the national movement; the more probable reason was that it wanted to pacify Hindu opinion, which had been increasingly rancorous over the past decade against the State’s so called pro-Muslim policies. Kashmiri thus became a victim of the interests of the Kashmiri leadership and complete unwillingness on the part of state and leadership to implement the mother tongue as medium of instruction was in large part responsible for high illiteracy rate among Kashmiri Muslims.

9 Glancy Commission.
10 It may not be out of place to mention here that in 1901 there were only 23 people in whole state of Jammu and Kashmir who can speak Hindi, Bahadur Munshi Ghulam Ahmad Khan, Census of India, 1901, Vol. XXIII, Kashmir Part, Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1902.
11 Zutshi, Languages of Belonging, p. 194.
Discrimination on the basis of gender was a feature of colonial education policy. The Valley of Kashmir was also most backward in girls’ education. Until the beginning of 20th century, there was no definite policy of government for girls’ education. They have deliberately left it, owing to the public prejudice. Until 1928, management of the government girls’ schools was left largely to advisory committees, private managing bodies composed of leading members of religious communities, and schools themselves were connected to particular communities. State was apprehensive that communities would perceive state’s interference in women’s education as an attack on their religious sensibilities. Religious prejudice of the people of Kashmir and their prejudice against education, especially of females, were cited as a reason for placing of the education of girls in the hands of advisory committees. However, these committees remained in the charge of the education department and conducted supervision over the general work of the schools with the rules sanctioned by the Education Minister for the purpose. This gave state sanction to overtly religious policies recommended by the advisory committees, such as closing Muslim girls’ schools on Fridays instead of Sundays for the reason that women were supposed to be more religious and moral.

The curriculum introduced in the girls’ school was aimed to inculcate the concept of home-industry among the students. Subjects like needle work, household work, tailoring, sweeping, reading of literary and religious books, besides some arithmetic were taught. Thus, by education women were tied more securely to domestic tasks by realigning patriarchal domesticity. There was a great deal of wastage in girls’ educational schools due to the fact that a large majority of girls did not carry on their education to the 5th class by which time they may be reasonably expected to achieve permanent literacy. Although Hari Singh brought the control of girls’ education under the newly carved girls’ education department, he seems to be ambivalent when girls were excluded from the Compulsory Education Act of 1930. Moreover, girls were totally excluded from higher and technical education due to the absence of these institutions for them. The state’s expenditure on education of girls was far less as compared to boys’ education.

The role of private agencies had been pivotal in the dissemination of modern education in India. Among them, Christian missionaries played a significant role. In Kashmir, it was because of Church Missionary Society London (CMS) that the foundations of modern education were laid. In fact, they became the role model for the state schools in the policies of education. They had faced a number of problems on
account of the intimidating attitude of the early Dogra rulers. However, the missionaries put up bold resistance to all such odds and carried their mission forward. They brought a number of social, cultural and health reforms in Kashmir. But participation in the mission schools was limited to the elite sections of society, especially the Pandits. Moreover, the missionary activities remained confined to Srinagar city for a long time, ignoring the large part of the Valley.

Nevertheless, missionary activities gradually penetrated into the whole society, which could be seen in the emergence of different socio-religious reform movements among different communities. The reform movements led by the Hindu and Muslim leaders gave a fillip to the expansion of education. These movements did not go beyond their respective communities, and often gave communal colour to their programmes of action. The government’s initial approach was hostile to the private agencies, particularly towards Christian missionaries. However, latter on, they followed the colonial policy of grant-in-aid to the private institutions. In this way, government was able to execute their rules and regulations on the aided institutions. Notwithstanding the contribution of government and non-government agencies to development of education, the situation of education on the eve of partition was worse, which could be established from the fact that literacy rate of Jammu and Kashmir was just 5% or 6%.

The legacy of princely Kashmir is persisting. Kashmiri people’s struggle for economic and social rights is continued in post-colonial period. Kashmiri Muslims, though in majority, are the most educationally backward community in Jammu and Kashmir State. According to census 2001, their literacy rate is 47.34, which is much lower than national and state averages. Moreover, Census 2011 put Jammu and Kashmir State at the 30th place in the all India literacy ranking of all the states and union territories of Indian Union, with a literacy of 68.74%. There is a huge gap between rural urban literacy. According to Census 2001, urban literacy rate of Jammu and Kashmir among Muslims was 63%, while the rural literacy was only 43%. Women’s education is also in a disappointing condition. In urban areas there is a gap of 20% between male and female

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literacy rates. Similarly, in rural areas, it is 24%. Quality is missing in every aspect of education in Kashmir.

The performance of different centrally sponsored schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Government of India’s flagship programme to achieve UEE (Universalization of Elementary Education), in a time bound manner by 2012, shows flawed and sluggish implementation of the programme. The fate of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RAMSA), Government of India’s another flagship programme to achieve USE (Universalization of Secondary Education) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidalaya (KGBV) to enhance the rate of girls’ education in the state is not up to the mark.

Thus, to bring desirable changes, there is need to think beyond colonial mentality, so that durable changes in the system can be achieved. Firstly, there is a need to make education accessible at all stages, to everybody irrespective of caste, colour, gender, region and religion. To achieve this end, legislation of Right to Education has to be vigorously enacted. There is a need for renewed focus on improving people’s access to education and skill acquisition at the elementary level, where too many remained in sub-standard educational environment. Government of India has established Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in several districts of almost all the states. These schools have shown good results in extending quality education to the deprived sections in rural areas. Such quality and competitive schools should be opened at large scale.

Moreover, poverty has been the main cause of illiteracy. Even though government is providing free books and other things to students, education for them is a luxury. A child in a poor family is expected to contribute financially to the family; so, the poor family cannot afford to lose him/her to school. Thus these families need economic incentives first so as to enable them to think of education. Secondly, there is a need for close coordination between Central and State authorities, because it had been seen that innumerable funds had been lapsed due to the lack of organisational link between them. Thirdly, mushrooming of teacher’s training colleges in Jammu and Kashmir has adversely impacted the quality of teacher’s training; therefore, there is a need to improve their quality. Fourthly, there is an urgent need of rigorous teachers’ recharge programme, especially for the teachers appointed under the scheme of SSA. Fifthly, technical and vocational courses should be introduced at large scale.

In order to get away with the colonial inherited education, it is high time to follow the guidelines of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) which stressed
upon—connecting knowledge to life outside the school; ensuring that learning shifts away from rote methods; enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks; making examinations more flexible and integrating them with classroom life; and nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country. Last, but not least, except Kashmir, all regions had been able to develop their regional vernaculars whether it may be Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam to name a few. No doubt, Kashmiri has been given its place in scheduled languages; however, imparting education in Kashmiri is a dream yet to be realised. Therefore, there is an urgent need for imparting education in the mother tongue of Kashmiris at least at the primary stage of education.

Finally, in the present global era, which is full of challenges, we cannot think of an inclusive society without quality education. In fact, when a community is being deprived of quality education, which is an important indicator of development, this deprivation not only leads to educational exclusion but it shuts doors for a number of opportunities. So, there is an urgent need to make education accessible to all unprivileged classes of our society so that they may be able to reap the fruits of development. By comparing the educational progress of Kashmir with rest of states, one gets the impression that the growth, even after independence, has been sluggish for the Jammu and Kashmir. With the question as to what happened during these 65 years after India’s independence and the accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which led to the slow growth of education in the state in terms of both quality and quantity, needs to be thoroughly probed to arrive at reasonable solutions. I hope my thesis would aid such a prospective researcher by providing the platform of historical background to educational backwardness in Princely Kashmir.