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Muslim Response to British East India Company Educational Policies in India (1813-54)

Abstract

This research is a view to explore the different aspects of British company's educational policies (1813-54), educational role of Christian missions and reaction of Muslims in India. This period created Oriental and Anglistics educational conflicts in the history of India. Indian Muslims showed reaction against company's policies through different revivalist and religious movements. This research is focused on the causes of educational backwardness during this era. Along different educational issues, company also got the credit of introducing modern education in India. The results of company's policies can also be identified through the movements of the necessity of western education in Indian Muslims in the shape of Aligarh movement.

Education is a learning process which enables the human beings or societies to develop their intellect and to promote their way of thinking. Education is also a source of progress which brings lot of changes in every field of life and civilizations but on the other hand the post-modern view about the education is “as a tool of power structure so the post-modern theory of education was implemented in India during the company rule¹.

The main purpose of education is to get awareness about the new dimensions of the World and this is also a source of drastic change in the society. There are two approaches used as the internal and external in the study of history of educational development. External approach is about the result of political, economics, socio cultural, philosophical, geographical and psychological factors and internal approach dealt with the proper system of education, student's disciplines, teacher's methodology of teaching, curriculum and other practices. The external approach about education can be viewed during East India Company Rule in India. Any government agency should not focus on single factor working behind the educational policies. Education should be internal process.

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According to Islamic thought, seeking of knowledge is essential religious aspect for every Muslim. In this context, importance of education was considered as the social acknowledgement among the Muslim community. In the history of Islam, various schools and colleges in addition to the seminaries were endowed by the many influential and wealthy people. In this regard, every Muslim state promoted the welfare of educational institutions by helping it. They provided financial support in the shape of land and cash to each deserving scholar and it was a great literary contribution by these private agencies which was totally free of any interest².

Sindh was the first place where Islam became in contact with the India; this was done by Muhammad Bin Qasim who by the way of city Shiraz entered his army in Sindh through Makran coast. The permanent settlement of Muslims in India and conversion of indigenous people led to the establishment of “Mosques” especially in the towns which became centres of Muslim educational or literacy activities in India. The educational policies were not restricted for a specific group, caste or society. These institutions promoted a liberal system including arithmetic, languages, grammar and logic. In the same manners, the Muslims khanqahs of sufi saints too made provision for education which was mostly religious or spiritual. Shrines were also institutions of education. Muslims were successful in gaining improvement in their system of education by integrating the curriculum³.

No differences were made between the worldly and the knowledge of religion by the adoption of inter-disciplinary method. Education was on the top priority with the entrance of rule of Islam. The reason was that the importance to the jurisprudence was their main focus compared to the Islamic and religious subjects by the Ghazni and Ghur who were the founders of building an Islamic state in India. This brought gradual improvement in the system and many subjects were increased in the curriculum⁴. Logic was widely known in Akbar’s ruling period by the efforts of Shah Fate Ullah Shirazi. Dars e Nizamia was given a turn by Shah Wali Ullah. They established Muslim state in India shifted to the Mughals dynasty by the way of several rulers like Turk, Tughlaq, khilji and the Lodhi. Mughals rule during the 16th to 18th century A.D. promoted the educational growth to such an extent which has no match to the education during the pre-Muslim rule in India⁵.

All the necessary arrangements for teaching subjects of history, tradition, philosophy, writings and poetry were carried out by the Mughal rulers and their provincial governments. A large number of scholars had command to teach these subjects and they were brought from the neighbour Islamic states by the greatest interest of Mughals in learning and education. The patronage of Mughals was not only confined to the education of the religion. The Mughals state which was considered as an Islamic state was then replaced by the English. The degeneration process started during the Mughals era long before the Bengal was ruled by the

East India Company. By the death of Aurangzeb, destabilization in the ruling process started.

So in this case, the Mughal Empire failed because of the defence of many feudal lords who were not prepared to act like Vassals. The entire Empire was balkanized by their gradual independence. Extreme weaknesses of the Empire were exposed by the Nadir Shah invasion to North India and Delhi during 1739. Similarly, the factor of Jatt and Marhatta power was also increased at the cost of Mughal Empire authority. The sub-continent was left vulnerable for foreign invasion in order to achieve the power by the losing control of the Mughals Empire. British penetrated in India through the bay of Bengal and changed the history by establishing the different trading posts there and showed deeper interest in the region⁶.

The victory by the British during the Pallas War in 1757 made them dominating the India. With the appearance of company's rule over Indian politics a new chapter of Muslim history started. East India Company has no interest in the education of the natives from 1757 to 1813. East India Company did not adopt proper policy for educational development a few steps were taken unofficially or privately. However during this period, company encouraged the Christian missions who came in India with the European traders and played an important role for the education of Indians and for the spread of Christianity. Company's attitude remained controversial during 1757 to 1813. Initially the British East India Company supported by the grants and many individuals also endorsed the missionaries in India.

A number of educational institutions or charity schools have been established for the European or Anglo Indian Officials of East India Company. The British educational policies left a great impact on the people of India not only western education introduced through English language in India but modern educational trends also developed in Indian society. British in India introduced an administrative system for their political stability. By the times many problems have been created through the conflict of political status and administrative system. So different debates were started on the nature of Indian education and these debates were an outcome of the images of India developed by British. The British educational policies shaped by many imperial leader, administrators as well as missionaries, politicians and religious reformers. The early educational policy emerged in the form of administrative minutes, Dispatches and Charter Acts by the Directors of British East India Company. The Indian people were apprised to the defects of indigenous education and benefits of modern English education and language British neglected the local educational trends of India and developed their modern and scientific educational system in India. The British claimed that the India ceased to be a country of exploitation by last rulers and if India has to compete with other developed nations, it would have westernized educationally⁷.

East India Company showed no interest for the Indians education as it was just a mere trade company up till 1813 but missionaries were encouraged to India during this period. Import of Christianity and the western European culture was the main target of the company and for this, parliament of that time included a Clause No. 43 in the Company's charter which became an annual provision for promoting education for the first time. Company's primary objective was trade as they have no interest to impose western educational system on the prevailing subjects in India. By the enforcement of the Charter Act of India during 1813, pressure exerted on the Company to accept the basic responsibilities of Indian educational system⁸.

As the British have no purely motives about the education but they kept the several other motives like social, political, economic and religious attached to their educational policies. The concept of feeling superiority was dominated in the educational policies launched by the Company and this concept of superiority complex was easily viewed in Macaulay's minutes as well as the wood dispatch. Favorable attitude towards the education of Muslim community was shown by the government of that time but it had lack of planning regarding its implementation.

In fact Muslim remained susceptible to adopting and incorporating British influences which would later enable them to find room within their own traditions and view these features as consisted with their own as happened with situation. Second were the changes inherent in the institutions itself, the pedagogical changes involving the system of examination, fixed curriculum, separate department and class division created by institutions were previously foreign to India and would also be picked up by reformist madrasas, perhaps as an expression of their own desire to regulate and systemize the traditional process of learning⁹.

Now European and Indian traditions were representing two different streets of learning with one of them being held as clearly superior to other. Two bodies of knowledge promoted different morals, ethics and intellectual perspective of life. Anglesite promoted English not only for pre-eminence of English in world but also for the promotion of British morals and value. So a social clash developed in India between the targets of Anglistics and Orientlist group¹⁰.

Macaulay was emphasizing the transformational power and purpose of European learning in India. The transformational power of European sciences by British was opposed by Muslim Ulama who was against the learning of English formally. It is worth mentioning that this attribution of a corrective or transformational function for Anglistics education was also present among orientlist scholars. Indeed, the distinctions between Orientlist and Anglistics had become increasingly blurry in the mid of 19th century.

The historians of Darul-ulum-Deoband blamed on British official as “The English left nothing unturned in destroying Islamic learning and sciences and that was the major impact of British educational policies over Muslim of India according to oriental group”¹¹. Main result of British educational policies during Company rule can be observed by different movement like Aligarh movement.

One of the most important movements of reform had been started by Shah Wali Ullah an intellectual giant who made powerful criticism of Muslim practices of society including education. In his *Madrassa-e-Rahemya*, he emphasized Quran and Hadith at the expense of logic and philosophy. This marked a major difference in curriculum from the Farangi Mahall scholarly tradition in Lucknow. After Shah Wali Ullah, his son Shah Abdul Aziz (D.1824) played an important role to active the reformist movement against British. In a famous Fatwa he ruled that India had become a *Darul Harb* (A place of war). Though he did not call for military activity but instead of this fatwa, he legalized cooperation with British as long as it did not entail harming other Muslims. Although the fatwa did not stop other members of the Wali Ullah’s Jihad tradition, such as Syed Ahmad Shaheed (1786-1831) gave the fatwa of military resistance against colonial rule and gave it priority to the project of education as means of eventually attaining religious revival and strength¹².

Muslims were divided in response to western educational system while having certain complaints about it. The compromising behavior and nature of the Muslims nobles and elite class showed positive attention and were consultative whereas on the other hand, the policies were keenly observed by the *ulma*. The education in the missionaries schools and colleges based on conducting several experiments on various aspects like spheres and situations resulting in evolving a broad based and diversified pattern which in the end was adopted by the East India Company with some modifications.

The missionary enterprise and its tutitional excellence was widely and universally accepted determinant of the widest and enduring the influence on educational development. The state turn into the favour of missionaries educational institutions as their qualitative operation was symbolized. Several factors including literature, printing, journalism, translation as well as the text books preparation were the effective tools ever applied by the missionaries for their education. The period of Indian society (1757-1857) from medievalism to the modernism was the transition period and it has a marked impact on the Indian history.

This period resulted in starting renaissance in Bengal which spread in the entire country. It had close link with the Christian missionaries activities and to the introduction of the English language as well as its education. Bible was translated into various languages during this period. In addition to that, several books on

various subjects like zoology, history, philosophy, medical, geography, mathematics etc. were written and published in the simplest Bengali language. Many Sansikrat books were translated into different languages, edited and published by the missionaries and this approach drew the people attention towards their ancient culture, tradition as well as the heritage.

In order to prove its superiority, missionaries attacked on the religions of Muslims and Hindus. This resulted in awakening of the Hindus and the Muslim community about their culture and heritage which otherwise was the main target of the missionary to attack. This step by the missionaries resulted in establishing the long renaissance movements. On the other hand, several British historians had a view point that the Christian missionaries, East India Company as well as the British government played significant role for modernizing education in India.

In spite of the education of Christianity at the missionaries schools, people of the casts like Sudra as well as of several untouchable casts started thinking about the value of education and all this resulted for the improvement of socialization among the lower groups. According to the minutes written by Lord Aukland and Elphinstone during 1838, Tamil districts had the strength of 156 schools of missionaries with 4944 pupils. The only difference in the motives of the primary movers like East India Company and British government was that the missionaries focus was to just spread Christianity.

After the prevalence of long controversy between the groups of Anglistics and the Orientalists regarding the educational system, the government under the governorship of Bentinck's Governor General made a decision to implement the western educational system in India. This was an existing traditional educational system which was based on the religious principles of the Hindus embodied in Upanishads and Vedas as well as to the progress of Arabic and Sansikrat learning. In another event, the famous resolution of 1853 stated that the promotion of European literature as well as the science should be the aim of the educational efforts of the Britain which proved to be gateway for the rapid advancement in the educational field. Furthermore, Woods dispatch (1854) and the encouragement by the government of the British resulted in increasing schools and colleges in the whole country of India which yielded tens of thousands educated Indians.

East India Company's ruling period in India was a combination of Christian missionaries interaction in social structure of India, the socio-religious activist movements in India, history of Hindu sources considered in the period of Hindu renaissance and modernization, on the other side of this period, referred to the insufficient educational policies of British in India. So this period should considered as the period of revolutionary changes in India, these elements did not

only disturb the political structure of India but a series of socio-religious conflict increased which affected badly on Indians especially Muslims.

Muslims remained far away from western educational trends with the fear of Christian missions; company had no concern about the modernization of Muslims. Company did not try to mould the Muslims trends. For modern education, its reforms were not according to the needs of natives. Muslims religious and revivalist movements put to stone in the educational backwardness of Muslims, these movements tried to activate Muslims against the socio-political influence of British. In the same time, Hindu modernization process was continued.

Thus for the reformist movements, education became subject to renewed attention and focused as means of achieving reform itself. Ultimately the reformist movement started by Muslim Ulma against the Company's educational reforms. After the Death of Shah Abdul Aziz, Delhi College associated the tradition of Shah Abdul Aziz's movement leading by the students of Shah Abdul Aziz like Maulana Mamluk. Ali and Rashid-ud-Din. As a result of their policies, the Muslims were kept behind as compared to Hindu community which limited their opportunities in government jobs of India. The modern Anglistics education had created many problems for the indigenous education of Muslims. This measure was result of Company's policies.

The activities of missionaries' started with the British arrival in India but East India Company did not encourage the Christian missions in India till 1813. Various organized missions like CMS, LMS and BMS made efforts the growth of Christian religious education with the translatory work as well as the foundation of educational institutions. The Missionaries in India were not only preaching Christianity but creating a threat for Hindu Muslim culture which became a cause of war for independence in 1857. Missionaries tried to take part in the fields of education and health to get their targets.

The Christian Missionaries' activities became more active with the extension of East India Company to rule in India from 16th to 18th centuries. In this period, many British Missions came to India with the spirit of preaching Christianity along with French and Dutch Missionaries'. In 18th to 19th centuries, the British Crown issued many rules and regulations for the Christian missionaries. There activities were continued in the presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Bengal. As a result of Christian missions educational activities, East India Company got an opportunity to strengthen its rule over India. This period was considered as the period of modernization for Hindu community and the period of Renaissance for Muslim community. This period is also considered the period of emergence of Modern India. On the other hand, the British educationalist and Christian missionaries' introduced the modern technological innovations in India.

It was argued that the British missions civilized the Indian society and holds the trust of Indians. These consequences of superiority opened new ways for the missionaries' activities in India. Although, Bengal remained under the political control of Muslims from 13th to mid of 18th centuries but it was not totally Islamized centre. Under Muslim rule, Bengal became a cosmopolitan society which was consisting of Muslim, Buddhist and Hindus cultural elements. In this presidency, the rule of East India Company destroyed the cosmopolitan status of society in which Hindu and Muslims were equal in status.

The EIC also destroyed the traditional life style of Bengal society through its educational policies and also strengthen the economic status of Hindu Banyans. Impact of these developments can be seen as the disturbance of social structure of India. However, Hindu elite class of India showed positive response but Muslim showed a negative response through the number of revivalist and religious movements in India¹³.

Due to the activities of these Muslim movements, India became Dar-ul-Harb from Dar-ul-Islam and Muslims of India declared their resistance against the enemies of Islam like Company and missionaries'. A Jihad call was given by the Jihad movements in India against the Company rule. The Tariqa-i-Muhammadiyah movement of Syed Ahmad Shaheed (1786-1831), Titu Mir (1782- 1831) Mir Nisar, Moulana Willayat Ali and Moulana Anayat Ali, the Al-hadith movement of Shah Ismail Shaheed and Moulana Nazir Hussain and also Taqiuni movement of Moulana Karamat Ali of Jaunpur were playing leading and prominent role in this regard¹⁴.

Faraizi movement was headed by Haji Shariat Ullah (1781-1840) in Bengal and the movement of Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah led by S Ahmed Shaheed (1786-1831) in Delhi was leading the Muslim response. Both responses of Hindu and Muslim community interacted with each other. As the result of this stress, Muslim society declined.

The Faraizi movement was started to give up the un-Islamic practices in India and to act upon the religious duties of Muslims. This movement also claimed the social justice for the Muslims in Indian society by the Company and Christian missions. His son Dodhu Mian movement became more militant against Christian missions and policies of East India Company. The character of this movement was based in social and religious practices of Muslim believe. The Taaiyuni movement was also remained active under the leadership of Maulana Karamat Ali John Puri against the Company's policies. He also tempted the Muslims toward Jihad¹⁵.

The reaction against Company policies also observed in Bihar Region in supervision of Moulvi Karamat Ali, was inspired from Shah Wali Ullah and Syed

Ahmed. The EIC promoted secularism in Indian society during 1772 to 1850. The educational aids provided to the people by the EIC also managed by the private agencies. In 1854, a neutral principle was made that equal aids should be provided to all the institutions providing secular education to the masses.

As divergent as they seemed, however Aligarh and Deoband formed the first institutionalized movements that aimed to uplift Muslims population through the education. Education presented a crucial challenge for Muslims living in the late 18th and 19th century during Company rule in India. Deoband on one hand represented the desire to return to a pure and reformed practice of Islam in education via a more religious Dars-i- Nizami curriculum. However, it utilized important concept introduced by British such as distinguish between and growing increasingly sensitive to differences at the institutional level between Anglistics and Indian learning, secularism and religion, tradition and modernity. This situation was especially cofounded by the emergence of Aligarh movement which aligned itself with the British system of modern education. This created difference between Muslim community as the impact of East India Company's educational reforms, transforming the struggles between the reformist movements and colonial society to struggle between different groups of Muslims within the colonial context.

So, a strange twist of events, the Ulama rushed to embrace traditional religious education instead of running after what ostensibly appeared to be the road to political power by enrolling in government colleges and schools during the Company rule in India. The distinctions made between traditional religious learning and Anglistics learning were clear from the foundation of institutions. The distinctions between secularism and religion showed a deeper look and this feature became especially pronounced with the emergence of Muslim who became known as pro Anglistics modern or even secular became of their advocacy for accepting and utilizing Anglistics learning. The divide was extended to create fictions within the Muslim community of religious and secular Muslim. The more modern of them went on to found the Muhammadan Anglo oriental college in 1875. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan as intellectual of education promoted the modern education with the traditional education in college. As the result of East India Company's educational reforms, Muslims divided into two groups known as conservative or religious while other as more secular on modern even both would claim to serve the religion of Islam. Education during Company rule was not only quantitatively inadequate, it had also qualitative defects. It had a predominantly literary bias. In Schools there was little arrangement for technical education.

Indians response was expressive to professional science Colleges. The exclusion of technical subjects in curriculum and a small no of institutions were offering technical course in curriculum. All higher appointments in higher service were

reserved for Europeans. In private sector except in Bombay, modern industries were owned by Europeans who when they required men with technical knowledge always preferred their countrymen¹⁶.

This period developed the causes of Muslim educational backwardness in India. This period is also responsible for the war of independence in 1857. Indians showed their militant resistance against the British policies which was the evidence of Indian distress on their rulers. Not only was the war of independence but consequences of war also directly associated with the period. Due to this war, Muslims were focused by Britain's as the main cause of this mutiny. The Muslims which were remained far away from western education now became far away from their British rulers. So, a political and socio-economic crisis developed in the history of Indian Muslims.

Company's policies were also responsible for the economic backwardness of Muslims. Muslims were deprived of government jobs because they were not educated according to western line. Muslims were affected on the whole by the policies of East India Company. Muslims were not strong enough to get their power back from British that is why their active struggle against the British was not reasonable. Muslim unity also became weak due to these policies and two Muslims socio-political groups organized as a result of this period.

Aligarh movement was leading Muslims to change their attitude towards modern education for their own political and socio-economic interests in India, other Muslim groups decided to continue resistance against the British rule with the preservice of eastern educational structure and traditional education. Dar-ul-Alum Deoband was representing the group in favour of eastern educational structure.

Results of the Company's policies developed the theory of the necessity of modern education among Indian Muslims. Enlightened leadership like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan owned the responsibility to aware Muslims benefits of western education and English language. Sir Syed wanted to make Muslims able to compete in the socio-economic and political dominance of Hindus over Muslims. Sir Syed generated many educational platforms to mould the Muslims attitude towards modern education. He observed the results of Muslim modern educational backwardness very closely and he wanted to get Muslims out from darkness. So as the results of Company's educational policies, Sir Syed awaked the Muslims about their socio-economic and political rights in India for getting the modern education.

East India Company cannot prove to itself a responsible ruler with the shortfalls of its educational policy. East Indian Company's educational policy was not up to the mark. In spite of educational development, it created many problems in

educational history of India like oriental and Anglistics conflicts, problems on medium of instruction, promotion of western educational system with the support of Christian missions and negligence of eastern educational institutions and curriculum.

Although Company got the credit of the introduction of modern education and English language in India but it cannot make proper arrangements for the enforcement of complete modern educational structure in India. Over all, Company's policies were according to their own interest. They ignored the responsibility of social welfare of Indians. I also conclude the emergence of the necessity of modern education among Indian Muslims. With the policies of East India Company, Muslims became active to get rid of educational backwardness, economic crisis and political disappointment. This period is marked as the period of Muslim awareness in India. The current educational structure of the Muslim majority area of company territory (means Pakistan) reflected the impacts of British educational policies still now. Pakistan's educational system is still facing the problems of medium of instruction and nature of education regarding as the modernization of educational system and curriculum. A great reflection is overviewed regarding the contradiction of public and private educational set up with the special reference of curriculum and medium of instruction.

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