



Promotion of English Language Under British Rule in Punjab (1849-1947)

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Abstract

During the British invasion of India in the sixteenth century the Dutch East India Company developed markets in many cities and towns under their control. In 1765, the company's influence had grown to such an extent that the United Kingdom had actually controlled the largest part of the country. In the beginning, English was the only subject for local community through the work of Christian missionaries, and that there was no formal order for the introduction of the language of the masses of the people. However, in the mid-seventeenth, the English language became the language of government, and many of the elite classes of the Indian people asked for instruction in the English language as a tool for social progress. In 1857, universities were opened in Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta) and Chennai. English was still considered as the language of government, the social elite and the national after independence, it was assumed that the English language would have to be gradually being replaced by the sphere of the state.¹ However, it was not clear that as to which language it should be replaced. In the beginning the Hindi language was the most spoken language, this seemed like the obvious choice, but the opinions were divided for different languages. In a country with a population of over 900 million people and more than a thousand languages, it was difficult to choose a national language but the native speakers of that

*languages will automatically gain access to a high social status, and it was easier to get power and influence. It had been expressed that English was not the native language, there was Hindi as official language in India and the English was just like Bengali, Gujrati and urdu language. Gandhi was also in favour of Hindi language and wanted to have a special status of English language for individuals.*²

Keywords: Language, British Rule, Punjab, Muslims, East India Company, Communities, Institutions.

Introduction

The charter Act was extended for twenty years in 1813, and the first two decisions were made that had an impact on both the language and the culture of the people. The ban on the participation of the elders, it was dissolved, and the British officers were allowed to collect all the Christian mission organizations in the company's territory. The annual expenditure on education was decided in the Charter. After this a formal debate was established in different areas Orientalization and Anglicization in the country about the teaching of English and Classical education in India.³ The dispute was formally resolved in time by the Governor-General Lord Bentinck's ship, and Thomas's Macaulay education, who had been convicted of the use of the South-east Asian languages and to discourage the study of the Indian knowledge. The duty of the British government in India was to fund only the education of English language and the promotion of Western education according to the Macaulay.⁴ The requirement of Junior Appointment in government sector was to provide English learning certificate under the Act of 1926. Therefore, it was the importance of the English language and it was necessary for the people that English became the key to public service careers in many related fields, such as law, medicine, business, education, and journalism. It was necessary to the all type of all the work fields for the progress of their worth, to gained knowledge which was required in English language.⁵

The British officers built the Sanskrit college an institution for English language and Western studies. The university's development

progressed at a steady pace. The missionaries, who had attained a new level of efficiency and popularity, became the third source of English language in education. After the opening of the Alexander Duff and Tilt in Kolkata (Calcutta) led to a new wave of enthusiasm among the students. Duff offered the English language training course for anyone who wanted to get admission in this school. Thus, the universities of the British period were also considered to be the title of a Western education. The privileged class established new Church and create institutions that were served for their own interests. Almost 50 % of Hindu universities were following west knowledge topics, which were in English language and it was necessary for the students to learn English language as well. A new initiative for the promotion of English language by the company was to offer low cost textbooks for primary schools with the collaboration of Hindu's elite and British which was encouraged by the society. The purpose of the Calcutta School Society was the promotion of education, through Government-led curriculum.⁶

During the period of (1854-1882) the promotion of English language had also been increased in favour of the policies of British government regarding English language and secular education. According to the Despatch of 1854 the conditions laid down for earning grants-in-aid were the following.⁷

1. Provision for secular education
2. Provision for using English as the only medium of instruction etc.
3. Only those schools of higher academic standard, which used English as the medium of instruction would be able to get grants-in-aid. The majority of the English schools were maintained by the western religious missions.⁸

The reaction of the Indians to the new possibilities offered by the British, which was mainly determined by their positions in the pre-British society. In the centre of the literary period, the company was working scholarly in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and South Asian education. For example, F. T. and William's College were doing with an English translation education. Those elite families, who were

literated, taught to students of a new language into practice. In previous generations, people were found in the Persian Empire, to take up employment in the context of the Mughal and post-imperial Muslim rulers. The English literature was available in the country as a whole.⁹

Development of English Language in Punjab

The rule of the East India Company in Punjab in 1849 brought about consequences of far-reaching importance. The political power of the Sikh community was affected in Punjab. The court language was changed from Persian to Urdu. Western education was introduced and knowledge of English, made compulsory for government service. These changes deeply and widely affected the position of the Muslims. The Anglicises wanted the moral and social regeneration of India through assimilation of European ideas and knowledge. Many of the young civil servants of the East India Company influenced by utilitarian and Evangelical ideas believed that England represented a higher civilization and had a moral mission to perform. Lord Grey, the Prime Minister 1830, attached great importance to English education as the foundation of progress in colonial areas. Spreading English education was not an act of disinterested magnanimity.¹⁰ It was to provide a positive bond between the rulers and the ruled. The spirit of English literature cannot be but favourable to the English connection, wrote Trevelyan. English education would stop the Indians from regarding their rulers as foreigners and in fact make them intelligent and zealous co-operator.

The rate of growth, however, was not uniform throughout the country. There were different rates of growth in one region as compared with another. The first impact of English Education was felt in such three presidencies, which provinces were annexed by the Britain firstly because Britain were sea Empires. Everywhere literacy and education were more widespread among men and women, in cities than in villages, and amongst the higher castes. During British rule in Punjab many Hindus revivalists movement were against the Muslims. The Hindu revivalists especially Arya smajists also made most indecent attacks upon Islam, The Holy Prophet and the other spiritual leaders of the Muslims. The Satya Parkas, the “Bible” of the

Arya Samaj movement, is full of indecent remarks against Islam. The Hindus took out processions accompanied by the beating of drums before the mosques, without caring that their noise disturbed the prayers. They were repeatedly requested to avoid mosque areas but without effect. At various places, Muslims were not allowed to recite Azan (their call for prayers) while in some, their places of worship, discredited with immunity.¹¹

During the Mughal reign, the Persian language produced unity and it had been broken in Sindh, Punjab, U.P., Bihar, Bengal, Deccan and North India. Where the British stabilized themselves, first they introduced vernacular languages and then English replaced Persian. In Bengal, Bengali script and Hindu Bangla were promulgated in 1876. Muslims protested against this action of the Government. Hindi declared as official language in Bihar in 1871. After the forty years of Muslim struggle especially of Sir Ali Imam in Bihar, both Urdu and Hindi were declared as official and instructional languages in 1911. In U.P. Muslim struggled hard under the leadership of Sir Syed, Mohsin-Ul-Mulk and Waqar-Ul-Mulk and others for Urdu. As a result of these efforts Urdu maintained its position as an official language till 1947. Language keeps pivotal significance in any educational system. It's imperative that the educational result of a nation can be upon a regularly modification and sequence in the curriculum with the passage of time, where the colonialism prevails, the whole fabric of society is affected. When British occupied India, such type of conditions were faced by the Indians.¹²

“A reaction in given stimulus is called response”. In the modern education language to be instructed under the government institutions and aided instructions during the British rule. Hindus and Muslims affected alike but the attitude of both communities was different. Muslims had certain complaints about the modern education and English language. Their suspicious got reinforcement through these complaints. Christians had the feelings of superiority about their religion and civilization.¹³ They considered Islam as the main obstacle in the progress of western civilization and human progress.

Muslim community responded in different ways about the English language. Muslim educated and elites due to their broad minded approach and loyal nature remained positively consultative similarly as they certified the emperor's order because of the nobles, status was held at the emperor's sweet will during the Mughal rule. The Muslim scholars who had different views about policies and had direct approach to the people's heart kept a vigilant eye on the policies of the emperor and thought about the Islamic and Unislamic issues. During the Mughal Emperor they criticised over the king and now they were also operated the British educational policies.¹⁴ According to Muslim elites the English language was admitted fact that modern education was not purely secular. The bifurcation of Muslim Community resulted in to the separate education system with the separate institutions. The Muslims main complaint regarding to modern education was that the mother tongue had not been made an integral part of it.

Muslims wanted to be instructed under the modern curriculum but not at the cost of their religion, civilization and oriental knowledge. They thought that education should be given through the medium of lingua franca of the country to hold the uniformity of the curriculum. Muslims wanted to have the adequate representation in the administrative body of education system. Their inadequate representation in the administrative body of education system was also the main cause of their decline in the education. Many Muslim Organizations and Associations reacted towards English language and modern education.¹⁵ All India Muslim Educational Conference effectively pursued Muslim point of view. Using this platform, Muslim scholars responded vigorously on the different issues of modern education regarding the curriculum, medium of instruction and administrative structure. Using the organs, Muslim scholars presented continuously demands of the Muslim Community regarding modern education.

The main cause of Muslim decline in the field of education was the abolishment of Persian language. The National Mohammadan Association stated in its memorial presented to Govt. of India on August, 1871. When British established their power, they advocated the Persian language to run their administration successfully but they

replaced Persian by English, when they got a class of Indians who know the English language; To satisfy the Muslims, Urdu and vernacular languages were adopted as medium of instruction at the elementary levels. It was stressed over the languages like Gurumukhi, Punjabi and Hindi as a court language in the provinces of Punjab and NWFP. But the Muslims in Punjab did not make it successful and Urdu had maintained as official and educational language in Punjab. British engaged in an intrigue to give the privileged position to the vernacular languages that could divert their attention.¹⁶ Naturally, it affected Muslim culture and civilization. British had personal motives for patronizing the vernacular languages and Urdu. Urdu became the beloved language of the British at that time because they could remove the memories of Persian through the Urdu language. To patronize the Urdu language was an intrigue against the Persian language by the British. East India Company and its successors left no stone unturned to exclude Urdu after Persian for promulgating the English language. It was decided in the memorandum of Lord Macaulay in 1835 that there were no worth in literature and knowledge in the vernacular languages. So the English language should be admitted as official language instead of Persian and only those institutions which instruct western education through the medium of English language be given grants-in-aid.

Under Sir Syed, the Muslims ' own language is the best source for mass education, and the need to be confined to the institutions of the districts, towns and villages. He pointed out that he or she will receive a primary education in their mother tongue, as well as in higher education, in the English language.¹⁷

"What position should we take in the Punjab University to study the English knowledge and foreigners and the low quality of English translation. This is a plot to stop our progress. We will told that our nation, and learn how Western education in the Western part of the language, to the highest degree. "

In the 1890s, it was said that the English could not be understand without the knowledge of the language and the Persian language is

the lingua franca of the Muslims. The English language is in Western-style education in the English language.¹⁸ In 1899, it was a question for the masses, education, and the promotion of folk literature, how you will suppose to be written in the Persian language and script, on the street, and it may not be a language in this province. Urdu was a Muslim language of creativity and about 75 percent were prohibited in the Northwest corner of the State. The Hindu community did not have any problem with it although using the Arabic script. But their attitude regarding language issue was against to the Muslim language. He encouraged them, to submit a memorandum to the Government, which is that you're using Nagri script in the right language. The Muslims have made it clear that, in this way, they had to study in their own language, Persian, Arabic, and Urdu. Therefore, they had very little time to learn English or British English.¹⁹ While it was considered to have only to learn Nagri script, and where there was no need for that, only in the English language to be taught and it turned out that one of the reasons for the poverty of the Muslims in Bombay.²⁰

In 1901, the Government of the Russian Federation conducted an exam for Chennai international airport and will be challenged with the recognition of the Hindustani (Urdu), as the official language. Muslims have suffered great losses in the government jobs as in the Hindi language; it is not included in the price of an Islamic language.²¹ In 1907, they were complaining that they were trying to expand the use of a single language, with separate audio tracks in specially designated Urdu-Hindi readers. Because of this process, in the literature, it can be referred to as either in Urdu or Hindi language. Therefore, the writing material should be changed. It was found that the primary complex of Bengal, and the language used in books, it was not purely and simply in the Bengali language. Many of the Sanskrit words have been combined in the Bengali language. The government proposed a plan for the reforms of this book. In 1908, it was requested that only seven percent of the people in Behar, were Muslim. In the United States were faced great challenges because there was no educational institutions in which it would be possible to study in Urdu. We must learn the English, Hindi and Murhatti language. It was a legal obligation for the

Muslims in order to study in Urdu in accordance with their conditions.²²

When it is considered to be required, that English being replaced by the Punjabi as the medium of instruction and for the Muslims, and indulge in the real life. It has been said that Urdu is a great language for teaching, and especially for the education sector in the province of Punjab.²³ It was for the preservation of the existing position as the language of science, of progress and education. In 1913, Mr. Mayo stated in the Education Committee and recommended that Urdu in the North of the river, the language of Indian Muslims, the lingua franca of the country. It will be used to teach students in elementary, middle, and high school. However, no serious efforts have been made to ensure that this did not happen. On the contrary, destructive measures had been adopted to promulgate the Hindi and Nagri in place of Urdu as a court language which acutely hindered in the way of promotion of Urdu and Muslim literary Progress.²⁴ It was stated about the education in Awadhi that Government was patronizing the Hindi language. In spite of that the number of students to be instructed in the Urdu language was 29,469 as compared to the number of students in Hindi language was 23007.²⁵ In fact, Hindustani language was as powerful as it could not be destroyed.²⁶

In the earlier, provincial languages were given importance. As a result, there was created a tendency of separation among the provinces. Therefore Bengali in the province of Bengal, Gujrati and Marathi in Bombay and Tamil and Taligo proclaimed as official languages. Neither Hindi nor Urdu included with these languages. Its result had no practical value. On the contrary, its negative effect appeared in Bombay.²⁷ Instruction in Urdu became necessary for government employment. It must be requested to the Government that no language except Urdu be a medium of instruction the colleges and schools. Textbook must be published in this language.

W.Brown Kerr stated in a letter;

“I certainly can bear testimony to the expensive usefulness of the Urdu in every part of India , as I have been nearly over it from Cape

Cameron to the Himalayas and from the mouth of Ganges to the Indus”²⁸.

Conclusion

After the annexation in the Punjab by Great Britain in 1849, education Instagram and the schools were more religious than secular in nature and there had been no development in the education system but only in English language under Britain government. The first public school was opened in Amritsar in 1849 and the Ministry of Public Education was formed in 1856 as prescribed by the education of the Telegrams in 1854. Thus, both the primary and higher education in the Punjab in the beginning develop rapidly. We have seen that in the year 1901, the province had 2,883 schools, 351 secondary schools, and 15 vocational schools. In addition, there were 3,850 private schools in the old style in many instances, religious education which do not meet the educational standards that have been set up by the Ministry of Education. They were not in a position to accept the English language and Western education in the schools. There are number of native schools that have been progressively reduced because the government won't give them funding. In the beginning education was started with the teaching of religious knowledge in both Islam and Christianity in their mother language. Religion held sway over the human mind and the Muslim scholars in Islam or the Padri in Christianity were the instrument utilized for the spread of religious education through mother language. Only the selected material was transmitted to the next generation. This selected material was arranged in the scheme of instruction and conveyed through the educational institutions. For this their mother or local language was adopted. The personality of selectors, their philosophy of life and their attitude to the world influenced the selection of material. In Islam knowledge was not itself a destination but a source to reach the destination. The curriculum was, in the early centuries, balanced between sectarian and secular studies. Quran, Hadith, Tafsir, and Jurisprudence were placed as compulsory subjects in the scheme of instruction.

Muslim main complaint regarding the modern curriculum was that it had no place for religious education and mother tongue. Muslim education was founded on the religious structure with their own language Muslims wanted to be instructed the modern languages. The isolation of secular and sectarian education was the part and parcel of the British educational design in English language. But the modern education was not entirely secular. As the language is the main vehicle to pass the culture, civilization, traditions and values of one nation to its generation. The effect of the superiority of Christian language, religion and civilization was dominated over the modern scheme of instruction. Subsequently, the European nations also felt the importance of religious education and their language. In Punjab the British realized its importance and laid emphasis on the inclusion of moral education in the modern scheme of instruction. But till the end of 1947, they did not make the local language in schools as medium of instruction in the modern education. The British had no importance of the Muslims feelings. They did not deliberately plan for the expansion of modern education.

Muslims objections were not against the subjects included into the modern education but against the content of these subjects especially history, literature and languages. Due to the absence of Muslim representatives in the text book committees, attention was not paid to the disputed nature of these books. As regards the languages, the matter was more complicated. The Punjab University started two courses of Persian and Arabic and the students were rather conversant with the Persian and Arabic. They just keen focus on the memorization of the translations of these languages. Other universities like Allahabad University etc tried to follow the Punjab University. This proposal made the curriculum heavy and put an additional burden on the Muslims. The Muslims had to learn in this way the languages like Persian, Arabic, Urdu, and English as compared the Hindus had to learn Sanskrit or Hindi and English. Education should be in the lingua franca of the country to hold the University of the Curriculum. Urdu could be the lingua franca of the country because of its popularity in all the parts of India especially in Punjab. But the British patronized the Hindi language. The term Hindustani began to use for Urdu and Hindi. English was the

medium of instruction from the secondary stage up to the higher stage. They laid too much emphasis on the learning of English language.

The British govt. admitted the popularity of the Urdu language as the lingua of India. Punjab University disapproved any scheme against the Urdu as the medium of instruction. But the British government policies were contradicted in respect of the medium of instruction. On one side, it insisted on the importance of English language as a medium of instruction and on the other, it promoted the vernacular languages. It is the principle of learning that elementary education should be through the mother tongue of the pupils. The promotion of modern vernacular languages could accelerate the literacy rate but the other factors literate the proportion of the Muslims in the area and to choose the vernacular language among the group of vernacular languages that was more convenient to learn for all the peoples in the area had been neglected by the British. The British government who used English language as medium of instruction in their educational policies, those policies are present till today, after going back the Britain. English language did not lose its importance but also it is read as a necessity and now government of Punjab has implemented it at primary level. It is necessary for the development of country and to compete at international level. English language that has its own status as international language, therefore its significance has increased for the educational development.

Punjab's New Government has initiated English Education from Primary level during the different periods and replaced all curricula with English Language stepwise. Its basic purpose is to promote all government institutions along with private institutions where education is given already in English language in order to bring Educational standard on same level. Besides this, we could be able to compete with education on international level. Its merits and demerits have also been come out but we can surely say that the English language which the English men started in Indian Punjab 150 years ago, has not minimize its importance today instead its demand and need has increased than before.

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