

British Educational Weapon and transformation of Muslim's Mindset in sub-continent (Historical Survey)

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With the ambition to keep India a permanent slave and also continuing to plunder its resources, the British adopted the policy to inflict destruction to Indians' intelligence and wisdom and not to produce awareness of knowledge among them. They also planned to annihilate their skills and art and they should be confined in the lowest services and farming, so that our supremacy might always prevail and we might continue to be the supreme rulers of the great Indian sub-continent. This is the reason that when Wilbur Force presented the proposal of this move in the British parliament that resources of preaching and education should be provided to the Protestant sect in India and from time to time the priests might also be sent there. But these proposals were stubbornly opposed by the owners of East India Company and they said that:

“With the establishment of the country and the religion and if it happened so then the superiority of the British in India will finish. It is against the wisdom to bring the principle of bringing the Faithfull's of other religions under your religion in the 18th century. If some thousands of Christians then an extreme suffering and the result of establishing colleges and institutions in America is well known to us and as a result of this move America slipped out of our hands. Similarly if the young priests would extend to every region of India, then the benefits of the company will finish. Hence, any Indian, desirous of seeking education, must come to Britain.”¹

In the 15th century when Britain through the companies established through the courtesy of the parliament laid an international network of world trade, then the Christian priests of Europe had sensed the fact that it was a golden opportunity for them to enhance their influence in the East. For this purpose almost in all significant civilization centers of Asia and Africa the Christian evangelists were sent. In this regard the Christian missionary institutions were effective chain. It was demanded from the East India Company to provide opportunities of education and preaching to Christian priests; and the responsibility of education must be handed over to

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the priests wherever their commercial centers had been established. It also advised the company to accord permission to the priests to function on the merchant ships.

Under this policy the company after its entry in India launched the education for the missionary objectives in 1614. The historian of education N.Law mentions:

“In 1614 with the company’s resources necessary measures were adopted for this purpose to prepare the Indians for the education of the Bible and were then arrangements were made on the expenditure of the company, so that the Indian Christian missionaries may be educated and trained for future job of preaching.”²

In 1698 the British parliament approved an “Evangelistic Bill” which made the Christian evangelists on every ship, factory and center of the company mandatory. It was also decided that the education of Christianity may be arranged for the citizens of colonies. The activities of the Christian missionaries kept on rising along with the increase in the company’s rule, and for this purpose new educational institutions kept on coming into being. These schools were not only opened for the Christians and colonies but also for the common Indians. As soon as this sequence moved ahead the Indians and particularly the Muslims began to watch this development with anxiously. Eventually, the Muslims raised their voice vociferously and due the effect of this voice the British had to change their educational policy to some extent and displayed soft corner for the Muslims. However, most of the European’s extremist and crazy priests were satisfied with this situation, as they desired to convert the whole of the sub-continent to Christianity in the wink of an eye. Hence they declared this policy as treason against Christianity and staged strong protest against this decision in and out of the parliament. They were of the view that all powers of Christian missionary institutions might be given in their control and moreover the resources of the company should be given at their disposal.

This dispute was also among the officials of the company and even it was at its peak between the company’s staff and other influential British element. Ultimately, this dispute was resolved in 1813 after the approval of the Charter Act of British parliament. This act possesses a status of a significant turn in the educational history of India. The bases which this act passed were as follows:

- a. The education will be the responsibility of the government and it will have to spend its resources for the positive accomplishment of this objective.
- b. A financial budget will be allocated for education.

- c. The basic objective of education will be to deliver the message of Christianity to Indians. For this purpose the Christian missionary institutions will have open permission to act and even they will be provided every type of patronage.
- d. In education the English education and the English medium of education will be adopted.
- e. Some resources will be utilized for the promotion of Indian literature and through these resources; the local intellectuals will also be encouraged.³

The 1813 act was in fact the document of brain child of Charles Grant, who was director of East India Company and the member of British parliament. His point of view was that the Indian society was at its lowest moral ebb and its cure is only concealed in the Christian religion and hereunder is an extract from his review:

“Our strategy will be such that we are presenting with this sense that this matter is in our authority and power that we should initially teach the Indians our language. Then we should introduce the easily understandable literary creations of our language to them and innovative topics exist there. Gradually, we will through this factor take the Indians to our philosophy of life and eventually to our faith. With the achievement of all these factors, we will slowly and silently demolish the out dated and distressed system of Indians.”⁴

This was the ideological base on which the British education policy was devised and was further developed by Lord Macaulay in an exclusive philosophy and a system.

The impact of the 1813 act was made on this factor that the missionaries and the missionary educational institutions got immense promotion. The development can be reviewed from this fact that from 1852 to 1883, the enrolment in the government schools and colleges the total enrolment was about 30,000, but this number was ten times more and about 3,00,000 students were seeking education in these institutions.

These missionary schools and colleges would not impart the education of the Holy Bible but had immersed Christianity in the whole educational system and would use the English language as a medium of education. In that era the Christian priests used to criticize the other religions openly and a large number of Indians were converted to Christianity.

To annihilate the educational institutions and knowledge or perish was not an ordinary issue. Hence, despite the opposition of every kind from the owner of East India Company and the executives the voices in support of the kept on rising and hue and cry also continued to be raised in support of the British policy. Yet still some of the discreet British also would support

the Indians and as a result of this factor a committee was formulated to execute the educational needs and its program in 1834 and the first meeting of this committee was held on 7th March 1837 under its president Lord Macaulay, who acknowledged the need of education to the maximum and launching educational institutions for the Indians. He also declared such matters essential on every step and in every sector of life, which could not popularize the education among Indians and neither the Indians might not achieve supreme knowledge nor might achieve higher position in the society. Such things and facilities were also not provided to count them as members of independent nations.

- The education of all arts and knowledge was imparted and declared compulsory in English language. It is obvious that a language in use in a region 7000 miles away and had no link with the Indians was made the source of education by getting superiority over the Indian children. So how much burden will be put on them to learn to get expertise in these fine arts. If these subjects had been taught in their mother tongue and English language had been taught as a second language, then they would have learnt these arts very soon.
- Then the subjects that were included in the syllabus were not so much effective which would have taken the Indians to the degree of accomplishing arts and crafts, development, economy and war strategy which were dominated by European nations, Germans, Britain, Russia along with Japan at that time.
- The surplus and unnecessary books of such subjects and arts were filled in the learning course that would make the brain of the students weak and useless, so they could not get perfection in any field of life.
- Two books of Science and Physics were also included in the syllabus and the imaginary and supposed but fascinated things would make the growing children get deviated from the religious beliefs and make them secular and atheist.⁵

The main objective of the committee's members was that clerks and interpreters might be provided to the British officials; hence, the British culture and civilization might be promoted in Indian sub-continent to keep them, away from Indian traditional ethics, spirituality and faith and bring them close to the filthy morality and diplomacy of the British. The European nations tried to develop spirit of worldly things' desire, selfishness and hypocrisy in the Indians, which were the mark of identity of these communities and the British supersede others in this regard. Hence, Lord Macaulay and his committee mentions following points in the report of their aims, objectives and scheme:

“We should develop such a group which would be interpreter between our hundreds of millions of public and us; and this community should as such, that it would Indian through its color and blood, but according to their temperament, wisdom and attitude, it should be like the British.”⁶

With this the opinion which was concealed in the heart of Lord Macaulay in deep covers was the one he had mentioned to his father in a letter and its words are as follows:

“The influence of this education on the Hindus is immense. When a Hindu becomes an English speaking he can’t remain faithful with his religion and honestly. Some Hindus stick to their faith for time being, but actually they become Unitarian or convert to Christianity. It is my strong belief that if our proposals about the education are implemented then after 30 years no worshipper of idols will remain in Bengal.”⁷

Hence, the outcome of these objectives very soon appeared on the horizon and the students passing out of schools, colleges and universities showed distress and hate with the religions and life styles of their forefathers. Furthermore, there was no lure and responsiveness in the modern day Christianity, which could attract them towards it, as the British were also generally not devoted to their religion, as their Christianity was only confined to their identity only as a nation and there is no impact in practice and belief of religion. Hence, they get entangled in the broker of atheism and infidelity and get away from good disposition and God fearing. W.W. Hunter mentions:

“Any young man either Hindu or Muslim, who pass out from our Anglo-Indian schools deviates from his forefathers’ religion. When the flourishing religions of Asia confront the western scientific actualities then they just fade away like a dried branch of a tree.”⁸

The British dealt with the Indians public with extremely selfishness, narrow mindedness and enmity. Hence, on the basis of these objectives, the British produced such complexities and difficulties in the sector of education in India that the country was caught in extreme ignorance.

Charles Grant who was the managing member of education in Bengal. He mentions in “Isha’at-e-Taleem”:

“The moral condition of the Indians is to a great extent deteriorated and for this their society is humiliated and disgusting. These depravities can’t be amended with the imposition of law. Although those laws might be very nice. In fact the root cause of their perplexities is their religious traditions and its spirit exists in their laws and is concealed in their false, impure and humorous religious principles. The only way of treatment of these weaknesses is that the light of our knowledge may be taken to these people. Especially the pure and sacred principles of our founder religion may be

imparted to them. In this regard our responsibility further enhances that when benefit them from our true religion then why this message might not be delivered to others.”⁹

In view of his political and administrative reservations Woolsley tried to advise the directors of the company with arguments and logic that the existence of college is indispensable. He was of the view that we would have to establish college otherwise our dominion would finish. What were the objectives of the setting up of college, it is sufficient to keep in mind that the principal or provost of the college would be a priest from British Church? David Brown was the principal of Fort William College Calcutta was a priest and the caretaker of Calcutta Bible Society. For Fort William College Calcutta, Maulvi Amanatullah had translated the Holy Quran into Urdu language. But the governor general and the meeting council decided on 19th March 1807 that the printing of the Holy Quran is not suitable, although the printing of 56 pages had been completed.¹⁰

It is thing to joy that for the services of Christianity, the translation of Urdu was published in 1804. This was second translation of the New Testament, which had been accomplished by Mirza Fitrat and William Hunter had reviewed it.

In 1875 the total control of the educational system was in the hands of the missionary institutions. The religious objectives used to be their priority in comparison to the political objectives. They had planned to convert all Indians devoid of being Hindu or Muslim as Christians. Hence, they didn't devise any exclusive policy against the Muslims. However, when Bentick and Macaulay joined hands in then government, then the new policy of education introduced by them was full of anti- Muslim flair.

Some of the aspects of the policy are given hereunder:

- The British had declared the teaching of the Holy Bible as compulsory.
- First of all they attempted to abolish the Muslims' education system. Hence, the trusts of the seminaries, rent free grants and leased out lands were confiscated and as a result these seminaries kept on closing.

W. Thomson mentions about the devastation of the old educational system in his review as under:

“Much time had not passed that the task of bringing old educational system to an end in an organized manner and the director education used to receive information to get delighted, which would be based on the information that in only a year and in a single Tehsil, six to seven hundred religious institutions had been abolished.”¹¹

Frederick Holiday explains the prevailing situation in his statement:

“I think that the teaching of the Holy Bible in Hindu College, Calcutta was to that extent which was not observed in any public school of the Britain.”¹²

Maulana Abul A'ala Maudoodi mentions that:

“The fact is that all the institutions were in the control of missionaries and in those schools the children were tempted against Islam and were imparted the education of Christianity. In 1865 in a school, of Hyderabad Sindh, there was not a single Muslim child on roll. However, under these circumstances, their existence is amazing.”¹³

After the implementation of anti-Muslim plan, the result derived was that after half a century a civilized and developed nation was made extremely backward and useless. The empire was snatched from them and their collective system was shattered. The Islamic laws were abolished and the Islamic educational system was abandoned. This system was replaced by such a system which was totally contrary to the Islamic civilization. Furthermore, they were also given the misery of abolishing their sources of income. The doors of earnings for the Muslims were slammed on them one by one. In a short span of time this nation was converted into beggars. The Muslims were caught in the entanglement of the western imperialism and became an item for sale.

The objective of the orient lists, which is highlighted through the study of their research is that if they couldn't convert a Muslim to Christianity then at least they must not be remained as even Muslims and the status of Quran and Hadith must be damaged to that much extent that the coming generations of Muslims may not like to utter the name of Islam.

Dr. Poying expresses his condemnable designs in this way: “It is true that we have not been successful in converting the students from Muslims to Christianity, but in my view, the conversion to Christianity is not the only objective, but we desire to impress them with western culture and civilization and concepts and ideology. If a Muslim doesn't convert then at least this is our success that the Muslim doesn't remain to be true Muslim. However, he is detached and if he accomplishes the Church Mission then the amount incurred on him has not gone wasted.”¹⁴

Dr. Mustafa Al-Sabai mentions in this context: “Its basic objective is that Islam should be hurt by targeting it with a series of allegations. Its innocent and beautiful face must be bungled. Its facts must be deviated so that the innocent public must bend their foreheads before their leadership and grandeur.”¹⁵

There were no Muslim leaders standing with British for application of his educational policy. However Akbar and Shah Jahan have some soft

cornered for Britishers and grant them the permission to open mission schools.

The famous institutions that played vital role to produce “Educated English Slaves” are Fort William College Kolkata, London Missionary society Chinsura Bengal, Church Mission Society Bengal, Madrass and Bombay, Wesleyan Mission society Madrass and Mysore, Scotch Mission Society Bengal, Madrass, and Bombay, St. Joseph College Karachi, St. Partick’s School Karachi, St. Marry School Karachi, St. Anthony School Lahore, Jesus and Marry Convent Rawalpindi, St. Marry College Rawalpindi, St. Marry College Lahore, Jesus and Marry Convent Bahawalpur. Forman Christian College Lahore,

It may be recalled that F.C College is the same institution, that the institution providing the funds asked a former principal of British era a question to that we have spent sp many amounts on this institution so he might be informed that how much students have been converted to Christianity? And the reply of the principal was that “Don’t ask me that I have converted how many students to Christianity, but ask me that how much students have not been stable on Islam? We have prepared a generation who will be no more loyal to Islam and this is the actual issue of our efforts.”¹⁶

In this situation the biggest and foremost responsibility implies on religion scholars and religious teachers of society as they may connect the people of society with Quran and Sunnah. So non-Islamic factors in society especially Christianity may not be able to get a chance to propagate. In this regard, following steps can be eradicating the Christians from society in an effective way.

- Our religious scholars should introduce religious of world to the common people especially beliefs of Christianity so that in the hour of need their objection could be answered in more effective way.
- Beyond the schools of thoughts and country. We should cooperate with each other in front of super powers for the cause of Islam.
- Keep their address beyond the unnecessary contradiction issues and ideological arguments.
- Scholars of Islam concentrate on the social and religious problems of people in their circles because priced takes interest in every problem of the people who come to church and tries to impress them by his characters
- Only slogan and speeches are not sufficient but they should do planning on concrete basis.

- The aim of seeking education is not only the achievement of degrees and employment but also to produce such persons who should bear nobility and good moral character.

The significance of moral character has been stated by Molana Maudoodi in these words “our aim is not to be satisfied only by teaching books, knowledge and Art. The need of hour is that our every youngster should bear Islamic character A person is useless for us who has no moral character.”¹⁷

A person with excellent moral character can not only save the common people n society from the trap of missionary activities but also can provide opportunity to non Muslims to attracts towards the divine faith (Islam) by preaching his religion.

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