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Continuity and Change: Education narratives in the areas constituting Pakistan (1526-1947)

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Preface

Much has been written about the impact of the British on education in the Indian subcontinent during imperial times. Although the provincial and district gazetteers provide some information, apart from Leitner, whose seminal work on the *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab: Since Annexation and in 1882* gives an unbiased view of education during this period, no other work is available on all the areas that constitute Pakistan today. Similarly research on the state of education prior to British colonization is sadly missing. The demand for administrators and other petty government officials albeit in an agrarian economy by the Mughals clearly indicates the existence of a considerable large number of educated persons. However the differing political economy of large parts of Pakistan based on tribal and nomadic formations points to a reduced need for education.

Countries that have been under colonial rule commonly trace fundamental problems in their education systems to the colonizers' policies particularly in the imposition of an alien language, denigration of existing local dialects and knowledge and management system. This paper makes a valuable contribution in filling the gap on the history of education in Pakistan.

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Abstract

Research on education in the subcontinent is mainly on changes introduced by the British under their imperial policies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Aside from British writers others have also focused almost entirely on the Indian part of the sub-continent with the exception of the Punjab both Indian and Pakistani. The state of education under the Mughals and Sikhs is mentioned briefly similarly, the other parts of what constitutes Pakistan today have been ignored. This paper attempts to trace developments in education from 1526 to 1947 using available sources such the *Babarnama*, *Ain-i-Akbari*, provincial gazetteers and other online resources to highlight the commonalities and differences in the attitudes and policies of the Mughals, Sikhs and British to the education of various communities living in these areas. The use of language as an instrument of power, class dynamics, the nature of work and attitudes of religious communities emerge as the key determinants of policy making against the widely differing political, economic and social environments encountered by the invaders from the west and east.

Continuity and Change: Education narratives in the areas constituting Pakistan (1526-1947)

1. Introduction

Pakistan achieved independence from over a century of British colonial rule in August 1947. The colonial period did witness some progress in education. However, the progress was largely limited to what emerged as India. The regions comprising Pakistan were relatively backward in all respects, including in education. At independence, 85 percent of the population was illiterate and in the more backward regions of the country, e.g., Balochistan, the literacy rate was even lower, with the rate for rural women therein being virtually zero. (Bengali, 1999)¹

From 1526 to 1947 the areas constituting Pakistan witnessed the growth of monumental empires established primarily by invaders extending from the Mughals to the British with a brief Sikh interregnum. While art, architecture, poetry and literature flourished, the continuity of disadvantage and backwardness resulting from the combination of a predominantly agrarian and pastoral economy, divergent values and belief systems, political instability and regional variations had an indelible impact on education.

Geographically, the Punjab or the land of five rivers has dominated as the agrarian heartland. Sindh was mainly pastoral with agriculture flourishing along the river Indus and areas irrigated by wells and inundation canals. The river Indus provided lucrative avenues for trade and commerce. The North West Frontier Province (NWFP) was similar to the Punjab with a large area under forests including fruit trees, while Balochistan was mainly pastoral and nomadic. The area of Azad Jammu & Kashmir was the less developed part of undivided Kashmir and was in general similar to the NWFP.

Against this background education narratives emerge from the interplay between language, religion and class as determined by the state

¹ Bengali, K. (1999). History of Educational Policy Making and Planning in Pakistan, SDPI, Islamabad.

imperative. This paper examines how these factors have influenced the purpose and provision of education. The major sources of information and data for the Mughal Empire is the *Ain-i-Akbari* (1595) with Leitner (1882) providing an indepth study on educational provision in the Punjab at the dawn of the British occupation and during the part of their rule. For the other provinces and territories that constitute Pakistan provincial and district gazetteers prepared by the British are the main sources of information.

2. Historical background

For more than three hundred years prior to the formal establishment of Mughal rule in 1526 by Babar, the Indian subcontinent was ruled by several invaders from Central Asia, Persia, Afghanistan, and beyond giving rise to what came to be known as the Delhi sultanate. Mongol invasions occurred between 1221-1327 the most famous being that led by Taimur who invaded present day Pakistan and extended his empire up to Delhi in 1398. Later from 1451 to 1526 other incursions from the west brought in the Aibak, Khilji, Tughlaq, Sayyid and Lodhi dynasties. The Delhi sultanate ended with Babar consolidating Mughal rule in the southern part of NWFP, most of Punjab, and the northern part of the Indian subcontinent in 1526 after having led five expeditions into Hindustan.

Although Humayun had entered Sindh in 1541 its conquest began in 1574-75 when it became part of the Multan *subah* (district) followed by Thatta *subah* in 1612. However, it was under Akbar that Sindh, all of NWFP and Punjab became part of the Mughal Empire. The western half of Balochistan remained outside the domain of the Mughal Empire throughout its existence.

With the death of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 Mughal rule began to decline and after a period of chaos in the Punjab a number of Sikh² *misls* were set up. These were replaced by the creation of four *subhas* – Multan, Lahore, Kashmir, and Peshawar by Ranjit Singh (1799-1849) who made Lahore his capital. Despite the agreement of an eastern boundary between the Sikh empire and the British in 1809, Ranjit Singh conquered Kashmir in 1819. British expansion westwards resulted in

² Sikhism as a religion is more recent dating to 1500 CE.

three wars with the Sikhs with the annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849.

Most of the territory of NWFP province was part of the Durrani or Afghan Empire from the 18th century to around the 1820s when Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the former mayor of the Punjabi city of Lahore, taking advantage of the internal chaos of the Afghan ruling family, declared independence and annexed it to his own empire based out of the Punjab. Later on, after the Second Anglo-Sikh War of 1848–1849, when the Punjab came under the control of British East India Company, this region along with the 'Frontier Tribal Areas' acted as a 'buffer' zone with Afghanistan. The Province was formally created in 1901 by the British administration, out of the north-western areas of the originally Pashtun lands which were merged with old Punjab, initially under a Chief Commissioner, and then a full-fledged Governor in 1938.

Although part of the Mughal Empire, the territory of Sindh continued to be ruled by numerous clans and dynasties especially after the death of Akbar in 1605. The region also witnessed an invasion in 1739 by Nadir Shah from Persia. Eventually political power shifted to the Kalhora clan and later to the Talpurs. The British annexed Sindh in 1843 and made it part of the Bombay Presidency from which it separated in 1936.

Baluchistan's political trajectory had very little to do with the rest of the provinces constituting Pakistan. Ruled by various tribes a semblance of unity emerged with the establishment of the Kalat confederacy in 1660. For a brief period the eastern part of Baluchistan was under Mughal rule while the western areas were under Persian control. The entry of the British into Baluchistan dates back to around 1817 and is linked to its geostrategic importance for Russia and Afghanistan. This relationship was formalized in 1854 when the British signed a treaty with Khan of Kalat.

Baluchistan was socially and economically underdeveloped compared to other parts of British India with an extremely low literacy rate and a mainly rural and nomadic population; neither did the province have the same status as the other provinces of British India as it remained under the rule of a Chief Commissioner. The British recognized Baluchistan as having three divisions: British Baluchistan acquired by treaty in 1879, Agency Territories at times controlled by British officers, and Native States of Kalat and Las Bela.

3. Impact of invaders on language

The everlasting impact of various invaders on language development in the sub-continent is indelible as the prevailing local and regional languages were challenged by the language of the invader. Sanskrit was the classical language taught in the Punjab. Persian had come in with Mahmud of Ghazni in the 11th century, and was adopted as the court or official language by the Mughals and later by the Sikhs. Its popularity had increased after Emperor Humayun's visit to Persia. Persian poets came to live in Lahore and other major cities of north India. Sufi poetry was written mainly in Persian but also in regional languages Punjabi and Sindhi. Regional languages such as Sindhi, Punjabi (15th century) and Pashto appeared in literature for the first time in the 16th century (Schimmel, 2005). However, persons of all religious denominations learnt Persian as a means of livelihood and government employment.

After Persian Hindi was the most important language being the language of the largest religious community. Urdu was popular in the south of India in Hyderabad and was cultivated by Aurangzeb following his Deccan campaigns. It was a latecomer in the areas constituting Pakistan. The influence of Persian on regional literatures, especially those cultivated by the Muslims including Urdu is evident in the linguistic formulation of these languages. It has been suggested that the invasion by Nadir Shah in 1739 perhaps shifted the balance from Persian to Urdu.

Following the British conquest of the Punjab in 1849 Urdu replaced Persian as the official language. The earliest linguistic influences in the development of Urdu probably began with the Muslim conquest of Sindh in 711 AD. The language started evolving from Farsi and Arabic contacts during the invasions of the Indian subcontinent by Persian and Turkic forces from the 11th century onward. Urdu developed more decisively during the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526)³ and the Mughal Empire (1526–1858). When the Delhi Sultanate expanded south to the Deccan Plateau, Urdu was influenced by Punjabi and Haryanvi languages spoken in the south, and by Sufi⁴ and court usage (Library of Congress). Having developed during the period of Muslim rule prior to

³ Delhi sultanate was the principal Muslim sultanate in north India from the 13th to the 16th century.

⁴ The word Sufi is Arabic and refers to *fakir* or *dervish*. The Sufi movement grew out of early Islamic asceticism.

the Mughals, Urdu became associated with Islam. Adoption of the Nastaliq script style of Persian calligraphy by Urdu as opposed to the Hindi script that follows Sanskrit added to its Islamic credentials.

The Mughal rulers used Persian and Sanskrit and not the local and regional languages for the purpose of administration. This trend continued under the British with the imposition of Urdu and then English. The British replaced Persian with English as the official language in 1836 and imposed Urdu in the government vernacular schools. However, “the introduction of Urdu as a vernacular and the second official language in the Punjab had the profoundest bearing in the construction of new and to a great extent mutually exclusive identities and cultures in the province” (Kamran 2008). Subsequently the same language, Urdu, became the cultural symbol of South Asian Muslims, including the Muslim populace of the Punjab. Later on, the officially cultivated ‘native intelligentsia’ in the words of Ranajit Guha, sanctified Urdu and elevated it as the only language in the Indian Sub Continent that is capable of articulating Muslim ethos and culture (Kamran 2008).

4. Interplay of class, religion, education and employment under the Mughals

The extent to which education was intended for the masses in the pre Mughal and Mughal periods is debatable. Prior to the Mughal invasion although education was free, exclusion resulted from class and geographical variations. Support for madrasahs and religious education by the Delhi sultans has been seen as detrimental for education in general. For the lower classes vocational education was recommended and imparted through a system of apprenticeship either in the house of *ustāds* (teachers) or in *kārkhānahs* (manufacturing centres). Feroz Tughlak⁵ in particular arranged for the training of captives of war who were taught different arts and crafts so that they could become independent and useful citizens. In addition to providing liberal land grants for the upkeep of educational institutions, men of learning were encouraged to give stipends to poor students.⁶

⁵ Belonged to the Muslim dynasty of Turkic origin.

⁶ Article shared by Purnima, P. Education under the Sultans of India | Medieval Age

A more systematic administrative setup comprising of central, military and revenue emerged under the Mughuls. The educational needs of the agrarian state included, in addition to administration, documentation and recording of land records, village records, accounting, data on harvests and crops, salaries, wages, prices, weights and measures for the estimation of revenue. The administrative units were *subha* (province), *sarkar* (district) and *qasba* (small town), moreover, for revenue purposes the *sarkars* were divided into *parganas* (tehsils) and *mahals* (revenue unit).⁷ General administration and revenue collection gave rise to an army of *munshis* (clerks) and *patwaris* (village accountants).

The type of education to qualify for the above posts as well as other occupations such as the *qazi* (magistrate) and religious preacher was provided by the *Dars-i-Nizamiya* or standard curriculum considered sufficient until modern times. Named after Mulla Nizam-ud-din (d.1748) it provided instruction in grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, logic, scholasticism, *tafsir* (commentary on the Quran), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), and mathematics, and was considered adequate for the average student.⁸

Akbar's rule was marked by the systematic expansion of education, creating access and opportunity, religious tolerance in the type of education and in the curriculum. Although Persian had been adopted as the court language learning materials and books were translated into the regional languages. The curriculum was expanded to include languages, literature, law and sciences, which were taught even in madrassas or *maktabas*. Mahajani schools were established for the commercial or

⁷ The provinces were being divided into several Sarkars or districts which had the Foudjar (military officer), the Amal Guzar (finance minister), the Bitikchi (assistant of the Amal Guzar), the Khazandar (treasurer) of the district. The districts were further divided into Parghanas. The important officials were the finance minister, the treasurer, the village Patwaris and the clerks or munshis. The city administration was run by a Kotwal, whereas the village was administered by the local villagers.

⁸ http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/ikram/part2_17.html.

This curriculum has been criticized for containing too many books on grammar and logic and in general for devoting too much attention to formal subjects, and too little to useful secular subjects like history and natural sciences or even religious subjects like *tafsir* and *hadith*. But it provided good mental discipline, and its general adoption was responsible for the widespread interest in intellectual and philosophical matters. Those wishing to specialize or pursue a particular branch of knowledge went to the experts in that subject.

trading community where teaching of multiplication tables and tachygraphic⁹ forms of Lande and Sarafi, and weights and measures took place. However, Akbar's respect for different religions translated into Muslims being educated in Urdu, Hindus in Hindi and later Sikhs in Gurmukhi.¹⁰ While the *Ain-i-Akbari* identifies the promotion of subjects such as poetry, history and biography by Akbar, logic, philosophy, and scholastic theology had also taken on new importance during this period as is evident from the standardization of the curriculum the *Dars-i-Nizamiya*.¹¹ At the same time, the curriculum enabled students to receive education according to their religion and views of life while the adoption of Persian as the court language further encouraged all regardless of their religion to study Persian.

With the establishment of a well-organized central government at Delhi, with cohesive control over the outlying regions, there was greater linguistic unification, and the influence of Persian became far more dominant.¹² Political stability and patronage of education and literature by the Mughals also encouraged the development of regional languages such as Hindi, Sindhi, Pushto, Kashmiri, and other regional languages.¹³

Historical sources point to Muslims and Hindus the two dominant religious groups exhibiting different attitudes to education and work. Traditionally Muslims pursued agriculture and pastoral activities for which education was not necessary. Whereas, government employment, trading and commercial activities pursued largely by Hindus required a formal education. This was more apparent in Sindh where few Muslims¹⁴ could read or write; consequently all the river trade and financial transactions were in the hand of Hindus (Sind Gazetteer 1843).

During the Mughal period, girls received their education at home or in the house of some teacher living in close proximity. There were special

⁹ Shorthand for ancient and medieval scripts

¹⁰ Leitner (2002) lists 12 categories of indigenous schools (Sikh, Muhammadan, Hindu, Mixed and Female) established by the Moghuls in Punjab.

¹¹ http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/ikram/part2_17.html

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ European writers used the term 'Muhammedans' for Muslims till the middle of the 19th century.

arrangements for the education of the women of the royal household, and some of the princesses were distinguished scholars. Women's education was provided in seclusion and limited to particular subjects. With the imposition of Urdu in the government vernacular schools, Leitner (1882) notes the disappearance of intellectual life. It also led to a retardation of female education and the supply of female teachers trained in their own families. Moreover, for the majority female education was almost entirely religious or semi-religious, at best it included some training in household duties (Mehta 1929).

4.1 Religion and education

In general, education was considered a religious obligation. According to Hindu ideals there was no clear separation between religious and secular education (Mehta 1929); schools were attached to mosques, temples, dharamsalas and gurdwaras. The rich invited Maulvis, Pandits and Gurus to teach their sons and sons of friends and dependents. In addition there were thousands of secular schools in which Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs learned Persian while Arabic and Sanskrit colleges taught oriental literature, oriental law, logic, philosophy and medicine. Some level of education was available for all including sons of *banyas* (moneylenders) that included reading, writing and some method of computation. A sense of pride in education can be evidenced by the fact that almost every villager contributed a portion of his produce to a teacher; and almost everyone could read and write in one language or the other.

In the early Mughal period, education comprised, by and large, the teaching of religious texts. Leitner (1882) identified five types of educational institutions, *madrassahs*, *maktabs*, *patshalas*, Gurmukhi schools and Mahajani schools in the Punjab. The *maktabs* (places of writing) referred to Persian schools, which were often open to all religious denominations. The *madrassahs* (places of lesson), on the other hand, were chiefly for Muslims and taught the Quran, Arabic language and literature, law, logic and the sciences in Arabic. According to Leitner, Hindu pandits ran schools which concentrated on mathematics, logic, Sanskrit and Persian. The *patshalas* were Sanskrit schools whereas the Gurmukhi schools were mainly for Sikhs in which Gurmukhi and the Granths were taught. The Mahajani schools or *chatsalas* chiefly catered to the commercial and trading classes and taught the various

tachygraphic¹⁵ forms of Lande and Sarafi (Hindi characters), in addition to arithmetic.

Akbar's policy was continued by his successors Jahāngīr and Shah Jahān. But his great-grandson Aurangzeb (1618–1707) changed his policy with regard to the education of the Hindus. Provincial governors were asked to destroy Hindu schools and temples within their jurisdiction; and, at the same time Muslim education was supported with a certain religious fanaticism (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Although the state gave large grants of rent-free lands to *ulama* for setting up madrasas there was little control of education. There were no regular examinations, and no organization for maintaining standards. Yet Mughal education had its special values, for Muslim education did not decay in the eighteenth century with the decline of Muslim political authority. The reduced calls made by the state on employment of Muslim manpower left more men free to devote themselves to academic and literary work.

5. The Sikh period

Despite the unsettled political conditions following the end of the Mughal Empire, education continued on the same lines under the Sikhs who maintained a policy of setting up religious schools for Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs funded by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other royals. Data on schools and the curriculum collected by Leitner (1882), points to the more egalitarian views of the Sikhs to educating the masses and coeducation at the primary level. In the Gurmukhi schools, therefore, there was a focus on writing and mathematics, the latter particularly for the sons of *lambardars* and *patwaris* who wished to continue in the profession of their fathers, as professions were mostly hereditary. Similarly, itinerant *banyas* provided education to sons of *banyas* in multiplication and accounting indicating the practical utility of education. School schedules followed the agricultural cycle allowing boys to be free to help their family in the fields. This gave to the British an erroneous view of the temporary nature of indigenous schools in the Punjab (Leitner 1882).

¹⁵ Art of rapid writing

The British claimed to find few learned men in Sindh despite the fact that their instructors or Akhunds pursued a 15-20 years course of study. The system of education was: "The student begins with Arabic grammar and syntax, then proceeds to *mantak* (logic), and reads from two to five elementary works, next to *ma-ani-bayan* (or rhetoric) and reads from one to three books in it. The pupils are then considered sufficiently learned to study the Quran with its different *tapsu* (or commentaries). The *Hadith* (or traditional sayings of the Prophet), and other branches of education, viz. theology, astrology, magic, alchemy, mathematics, etc. are occasionally studied" (Sind Gazetteer 1876).

6. The Imperial Writ

6.1 Shift to English and state control of education

The period 1764 to 1858 was one of contestation between 'Anglicists' who denigrated 'Oriental' learning, advocated promotion of English, and made it the medium of instruction and the official language of government business.

Direct rule did not change the decision to deemphasize primary education and to provide occupational training for young Indian men who took jobs both in the lower tiers of the government and in urban, western-style legal and medical services. As early as 1797 Charles Grant a member of the Court of Directors for the affairs of the East India Company submitted a treatise called, "Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic Subjects of great Britain, particularly with respect to Murals; and on the means of improving it". (Charles Grant, 1797). He recommended the introduction of 'superior' English knowledge. English was thus seen as a means of imparting secular education and knowledge especially science.

This was followed by a series of legislations starting with the Charter Act of 1813 that had its own importance, as this was the first time that the British East India Company acknowledged its responsibility for the promotion of education in India. Charles Grant and William Wilberforce, who were missionary activists, compelled the East India Company to give up its non-intervention policy and make way for spreading education through English in order to teach western literature and preach Christianity. Hence, the British Parliament added a clause in

the 1813 charter earmarking one lakh rupees for education and allowed the Christian Missionaries to spread their religious ideas in India. The Charter Act of 1813 is thus considered a landmark in the educational history of British India, as it is the first legislative admission of the right of education in India in the public revenues (Mondal 2017).¹⁶ The General Committee of Public Instruction headed by Lord Macaulay was set up in 1823 to administer the funds allocated.

Lord Macaulay's Minute on Education of 1835¹⁷ laid the foundation for a policy that attempted to create a system of education that educated only the upper strata of society through English. More funds were made available for education in English compared to oriental learning and printing of English books was made free and available at very low prices. Macaulay not only promoted English he denigrated the local languages especially Sanskrit. Macaulay's Minute became the linchpin of the English Education Act 1835 when Lord Bentinck, the Governor General in Council passed a resolution promoting European literature and science, discontinuing stipends to students of native institutions, questioning the appointment of teachers of oriental learning and providing funds only for education in English.

Wood's Despatch (1854) called the Magna Carta of English Education in India was instrumental in shifting the state from being a guide to a controlling agency (Mehta 1929) in order to promote western education in India. It stated State responsibility for the spread of education to the masses and recommended a hierarchy of education levels with vernacular primary schools at the bottom, Anglo-vernacular high schools and affiliated colleges at the district level, and affiliated universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras Presidency at the top. Furthermore it recommended English as a medium of instruction for higher studies and vernacular at the school level.

The Hunter Commission (1882-83) further underlined the state's role in the extension and improvement of primary education and secondary education with the transfer of control to district and municipal boards. It also recommended a two division of secondary education - literary up to university and vocational for a commercial career. Streamlining of

¹⁶ Mondal's article provides an exhaustive list of legislations and other actions taken in India by the British in the context of making primary education compulsory and free.

¹⁷ Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, dated the 2nd February 1835.

higher education such as the duration of school and higher, subjects taught and female education was addressed by the Sadler Commission in the context of the Calcutta University and later extended to all institutions of higher learning.

Leitner (1882) mentions the decline in female education since annexation of the Punjab for reasons that included the imposition of Urdu and Hindi, which reduced the role of the mother in teaching in Punjabi; the weakening of religious feeling; and decline of indigenous schools. The establishment of girls' schools in public places open to inspection created an impression that education gave freedom for licentious behavior; hence it was considered not respectable for women. With education having been brought into discredit the education of girls in the local dialects also declined.

The influence of Christian Missionaries on the education system promoted by the British is clearly evident. The imperialist aim to increase the number of subordinate posts in administration and in British business concerns required ensuring a cheap supply of educated Indians. The emphasis on English as a medium of instruction supported these goals and also promoted the glorification of British conquerors and their administration. Initially the shift to Urdu (Punjabi having been declared a non literary language), Hindi and Sanskrit continued. At a later stage the shift from Persian to Urdu and later English is seen as having had disastrous effects on education (Sultan 2011). Missionary schools for girls were set up in all the provinces, which provided them an opportunity that did not exist previously. The overall decline in education is seen as concomitant with the decline in urbanization and manufacturing, as well as the creation of a certain class of petty clerks. Thus, schools started by locals were based on the model of government schools – almost all were Anglo-Vernacular.

Indigenous schools were of various types as listed in Table I. They were further subdivided on the basis of combination of languages and subjects offered giving rise to 23 variants. Quran schools formed the majority of indigenous schools in the Punjab. Attempts to enumerate indigenous schools were hampered by the biased attitude of the Directors of Public Instruction in the Punjab. Reports show the existence of indigenous schools in every village and town. While some schools supported specific infrastructure, others existed in private houses, village

homes, shops and in the open (Leitner 1882).¹⁸ These were mostly small schools having a few students. Schools with a focus on Arabic also taught medicine while Persian schools included manners as part of the curriculum. All schools taught basic arithmetic together with reading and writing, the three R's. Not only did the British de-classify many of these small indigenous schools, "the Board of Administration in the Punjab was ordered to resume rent-free tenures of land, even in the case of schools and religious edifices when their endowments were large", an action similar to the one taken by them in Bengal (Leitner 1882). This resulted in the dwindling away of indigenous education.

Table 1: Classification of schools

Education Categories	Types of Schools
Sikh indigenous education	Gurmukhi schools
Muhammadan indigenous education	Maktabas Madrasas (religious and secular Koran schools
Hindu indigenous education	Chatsalas (for trading community) Pathshalas (religious) Pathshalas (semi-religious) Secular schools of various kinds and grades
Mixed indigenous education	Persian schools Vernacular schools Anglo-vernacular schools
Female indigenous education	Female schools for Sikh girls Female schools for Muhammadan girls Instruction at Hindu homes

Source: Leitner 1882, p.11

The advantage of indigenous schools was their link to different trades - a recognition of the connection between education and the world of work. By and large, the British were dismissive of the indigenous schools. Their purpose of education was to create a "shallow system of preparation or office-hunters" (Leitner 1882). The trades and traditional professions were abandoned, resulting in "hundred thousand semi-

¹⁸ Mr. A. Robert's Report 1849

educated and needy men, for whom it will be impossible to provide and who will have been rendered unfit for their own occupations” (Leitner 1882).

The assumption of responsibility for educating Indians by the British Government shifted the responsibility of education from communities to centralized bureaucracies. This included the setting up of Directorates of Public Instruction, grants-in aid to selected private schools, establishing universities, promoting the benefits of a Western education which was linked to better morals, and the imposition of English as the medium of instruction. It also underscored the importance of vocational education and setting up schools of industry. It is ironical that the British borrowed the Indian indigenous system of education where the school was a part of the village system and the village teacher considered a public servant of the community, while it replaced indigenous schools with government schools in India.

6.2 Regional Variations

Variations in the demand and access to education across provinces and territories constituting present-day Pakistan show a correlation with religion, ethnicity, class and gender as well as the political economy of the area. The Punjab province had the largest number of educational institutions, followed by Sindh and NWFP, while education in Balochistan was almost negligible.

6.2.1 Punjab

The area constituting the province of Punjab that forms part of the Pakistan part of the Punjab was recognized as having 12 districts by the British and the territory of Bahawalpur, which was a State.

Figure 1: Map of Punjab early 20th century



Map Showing its districts and princely states

Source: Punjab FIBI wiki

The data¹⁹ shows Punjab as having the largest number of indigenous schools (4194) with makhtabs forming more than fifty percent of all schools. Four districts reported large number of schools; these included Gujrat, Rawalpindi and Sialkot, which had the largest number followed by Lahore. Rawalpindi and Sialkot had the largest number of makhtabs/madrasas, while Lahore and Gujrat had the largest number of Pathshalas, and the number of Gurmukhi schools was largest in Rawalpindi followed by Gujrat indicating a higher literacy rate among the Sikhs. Mahajani schools were mostly located in Sialkot and Lahore indicating a concentration of different trades in these districts. Although the number of pupils varied from school to school in general few schools reported having more than 20 pupils

¹⁹ The data should be taken as indicative only as stated by Leitner as different sources give different estimates of the number of schools and pupils.

while the average ranged between 10 and 15 pupils. Rawalpindi district reported the largest number of pupils.

Table 2: Number of Indigenous Schools of Different Types on 30th October 1882

S. No	District	Maktab/Madrasa		Pathshalas		Gurmukhi		Mahajani		Total	
		Sch	Pupils	Sch	Pupils	Sch	Pupils	Sch	Pupils	Sch	Pupils
1.	Lahore	295	4247	32	377	43	571	28	902	398	6097
2.	Sialkot	455	5355	14	152	29	394	30	612	528	6513
3.	Gujranwala	197	2433	18	273	35	481	16	458	266	3814
4.	Rawalpindi	660	8771	9	95	137	2894	10	883	816	12142
5.	Jhelum	200	3093	19	238	27	616	4	59	250	4092
6.	Gujrat	274	3828	20	318	53	879	19	393	866	5418
7.	Shahpur	85	1447	19	373	45	893	8	170	157	2883
8.	Multan	71	1118	10	109	11	203	8	686	109	2116
9.	Jhang	122	1423	14	197	55	770	5	116	196	2508
10.	Montgomery	158	1461	8	103	48	587	12	191	226	2292
11.	Muzaffargarh	163	1331	8	35	9	73	6	109	186	1551
12.	Dera Ghazi Khan	179	1645	5	42	5	32	7	114	196	1863
Total		2859		176		673		153		4194	

Source: *Leitner 1882, Part III, 1*

A comparison of indigenous and government aided schools shows the districts of Gujranwala and Jhelum having a high number of the latter category while Lahore district shows an almost equal number of both types of schools.

Table 3: Number of Pupils in Government Aided and Indigenous Schools in the Punjab in 1882

S. No	District	Govt. Aided Schools	Indigenous Schools	Total Schools Census 1881
1.	Lahore	5270	5193	10462
2.	Sialkot	4483	5497	9980
3.	Gujranwala	8335	3237	7572
4.	Rawalpindi	4302	5118	9415
5.	Jhelum	8493	1107	4660
6.	Gujrat	3737	2256	5994
7.	Shahpur	2105	1554	3659
8.	Multan	3546	3695	7241
9.	Jhang	1958	1820	3778
10.	Montgomery	1442	2014	3156
11.	Muzaffargarh	1612	1789	3401
12.	Dera Ghazi Khan	1695	1539	3434
Total		46,978	34,819	72,752

Source: *Leitner 1882, Part III, 1*

As early as 1860, the British advocated a class based system of education in the Punjab with special classrooms built for the sons of the gentry such as the Sirdars and Jagirdars (Leitner 1882). This was followed by the establishment of Chiefs' College (1886), renamed Aitchison College, for the wards of chiefs and leading families.²⁰ The Punjab province benefitted from interventions by Leitner who founded the Anjuman-i- Panjab for "the diffusion of useful knowledge, the discussion of subjects possessing literary and scientific interest, and for the free expression of native opinion on questions of social and political reform". His aim was to arouse a spirit of self-reliance among the wealthier classes and leaders such as the chiefs, priests and merchants. In 1873 a School of Surveying was set up in Oriental College, Lahore under the Punjab University while in 1912 a similar school was established in Rasul in district Mandi Bahauddin. The University of Punjab was formally established in Lahore in 1882 and was the first and only university to be situated in the area of Pakistan before 1947.

6.2.2 Sindh²¹

Till 1936, Sindh was part of the Bombay Presidency. The British divided the territory into five different portions for political, administrative judicial and revenue purposes (Sind Gazetteer, 1876)²². There were three collectorates²³ Karachi, Shikarpur and Hyderabad – further subdivided into districts and subdivisions, two political superintendencies of the Upper Sind frontier, and Thar and Parker districts. Khairpur State did not form part of the province. The population of Sindh was approximately 2.3 million of which two-third were Muslim and the remainder Hindu.²⁴

²⁰ Five Chief's Colleges were set up in Northern India. The Punjab had 40 princely states.

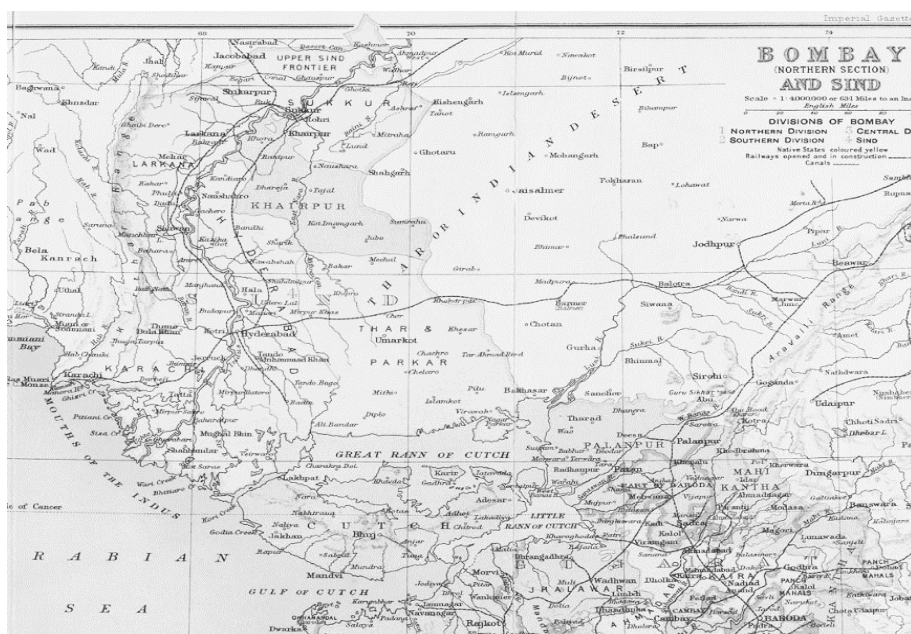
²¹ The information for this section is taken from the *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind, 1876*, compiled by A.W. Hughes, London: George Bell and Sons.

²² Sindh became a separate province in 1936.

²³ The Collector was effectively the most important administrative figure in an Indian district. His main job was to collect revenue and taxes and maintain law and order in the districts or collectorate allotted to him.

²⁴ The Mohammadans are divided into two bodies, one the Sindhi proper, and two the naturalized part of the community (Sayyids, Afghans, Balochis, Africans, Memons and Khwajas).

Figure 2: Map of Sindh (1893)



Source: Bombay, Sind & Baroda: British India/Pakistan provinces. Gujarat Sindh 1909 map Stock Photo - Alamy

In the five regions, a large number of local personnel were required by the various government offices. The Educational Department was supervised by an Educational Inspector, assisted by a Deputy, two Assistant Deputy Educational Inspectors, and 18 headmasters of High, Normal, Engineering, and Anglo-Vernacular institutions. Government schools numbered 213 in 1873-74, of these 26 were schools for girls. The estimated number of students was 12,728 of these the majority (8,531) were Hindus. However, very few students were studying English. There were normal schools in Hyderabad and Sukkur, and an engineering school at Hyderabad. Private European and Indo-European schools were set up in Karachi, and missionary schools in Karachi and Hyderabad. The sons of the rich Sindhis were often taught at home by tutors known as *Akhunds*.

The education process began with the teaching of Arabic grammar and syntax, followed by *mantak* (logic) and reading of two to five elementary works. Next came *ma-ani-bayan* (rhetoric) and the student read from

one of the three books specified; at this stage students were considered to be quite learned. They also studied the Quran and some commentaries on it. Other disciplines such as theology, astrology, magic, alchemy, mathematics, etc. were occasionally studied. Although the British declared Sindhi as the national language of Sindh, they considered the literature available in the Sindhi language to be of little account.

Data for the three collectorates shows the school size – of both government and private schools - to be much larger as compared to the Punjab; at times the number of pupils exceeded 100. This was probably due to the fact that schools were mostly located in towns. There were also more Vernacular schools compared to the Anglo-Vernacular variety in Sindh indicating the lower acquisition of English as the medium of instruction. Overall there were more students in these schools compared to indigenous schools. The British had introduced the Hindu-Sindhi character into government schools to increase attendance of children of *banyas* who were Hindus. Muslims were not interested in education. As a consequence most government servants known as *amils*, merchants, traders, and shopkeepers belonged to the *banya* class. Some progress was made in the education of females although the number of girls' schools was much less compared to schools for boys. Vernacular schools numbered the most and these continued to multiply but private indigenous schools were thought to be of poor quality and hence remained unaided by the British.

The Shikarpur Collectorate was the most advanced in education having the largest number of schools and pupils due to the larger number of Hindus *banyas* in the region. It was estimated that Shikarpur town had a population of 30,000 people of which two-third were Hindus. Most of the schools were located in Shikarpur and Sukkur talukas.²⁵

In the Hyderabad Collectorate education was generally seen to be less in demand and of low quality. There were a total of 30 schools in 1874 with 2185 pupils. Most of these were located in Hyderabad town which also had a missionary school that taught up to matriculation, and there were also schools for girls. There were six private schools aided by the government with 622 pupils.

²⁵ Taluka in Sindh is the equivalent of a tehsil in the Punjab.

The Karachi Collectorate²⁶ and in particular the town of Karachi showed great progress in education. The number of private schools was large as compared to other parts of the province possibly due to the fact that the European and Indo-Europeans located in other parts of the province sent their children to be educated in these schools. Grants in aid to private and girls' schools were evident in this collectorate. A number of missionary schools and those belonging to different communities such as the Parsis were established in Karachi town. There were also four Vernacular schools and an Anglo-Vernacular school as well as a school for girls.

Table 4: Number of Schools and Pupils in the 3 Collectorates 1868-69 & 1873-74

Collectorate	Hyderabad				Karachi				Shikarpur			
	1868-69		1873-74		1868-69		1873-74		1868-69		1873-74	
Type of School	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P
High School	1	101	1	128	1	91	1	77	-	-	1	135
Normal School	1	23	1	25	-	-	-	-	1	14	1	19
Engineering School	-	-	1	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AV Schools (1 st Grade)	1	182	1	146	1	102	1	124	1	55	1	70
AV Schools (2 nd Grade)	3	160	2	222	3	291	3	462	2	293	2	362
Vernacular Schools	15	889	48	2688	20	1098	30	1381	28	1213	73	4954
Grants in aid to Indigenous Schools	-	-	-	-	3	216	7	789	-	-	-	-
Total Boys Schools	21	1355	54	3227	28	1798	42	2833	32	1575	78	5540
Girls Gov. Schools	10	262	12	368	5	177	6	296	11	377	8	341
Girls Private Schools	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	38	-	-	-	-
Total Girls Schools	10	262	12	368	5	177	7	334	11	377	8	341
Grand Total	31	1617	66	3595	33	1975	49	3167	43	1952	86	5881

Source: Compiled from Sind Gazetteer 1886.

Other districts of the province, such as Hala had 20 government schools with an average of 849 pupils. Indigenous schools varied in size and

²⁶ The Collector was effectively the most important administrative figure in an Indian district. His main job was to collect revenue and taxes and maintain law and order in the districts or collectorate allotted to him. All Collectors and Sub-Collectors were British.

had fewer students, usually between 11 and 120. The district also had an Anglo-Vernacular school of second grade. The districts of Thar and Parker reported 16 schools (1 was Anglo- Vernacular) in 1869 with 70,828 students. There were also a number of private schools, however there was no female government school. The Frontier district of Upper Sind had 5 government Vernacular schools with 151 students.²⁷ Khairpur State which was not part of the Sindh province at that time had few private schools in which Persian was taught; otherwise some instruction was given by *Mullas* (religious persons) for a fee.

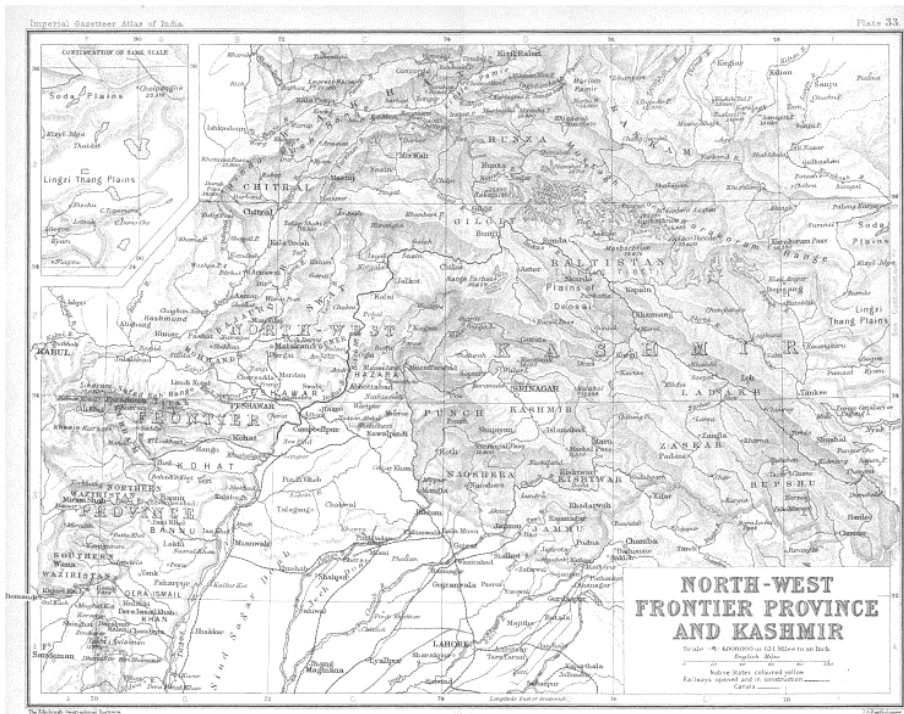
Gazetteers published in 1919 show considerable advances in education in different parts of the province especially in Karachi (Gazetteer Karachi, 1919). Impact of the multi-ethnic composition of Karachi was reflected in the variety of educational institutions including colleges set up to cater to Parsis, Gujaratis, Cutchis, Memons, etc. However, schools beyond the primary level were few in number, as were schools for girls. The management of schools rested with Municipal Boards in the city where students had to pay for education and in the rural and non-municipal areas with Local Boards, which in most cases provided free education. Muslims constituted 30 percent of pupils in the former and 57 percent in the latter indicating their reluctance to invest in education.

6.2.3 North West Frontier Province (NWFP)

The province was divided into settled districts and tribal areas with the latter occupying the larger part of the province (Total area 38,665 sq. miles, of this British territory was 13,193 sq. miles). There were five districts (Peshawar, Hazara, Bannu, Kohat and Dera Ismail Khan; three states of Chitral, Dir and Swat; and a number of tribal areas and agencies (Buner, Mohmand, Khyber, Khurram, and North and South Waziristan) The population in 1901 was 2,125,480; however if all agencies were added the approximate figure was four million.

²⁷ 2 in Jacobabad taluka, 2 in Kashmore, 1 in Thul taluka

Figure 3: Map of NWFP under the British



Source: North-West Frontier, Jammu & Kashmir: British India/Pakistan 1931 map Stock Photo - Alamy

There were more maktabs that is schools attached to mosques run by religious leaders or maulvis and women's education was almost non-existent being limited to reading of religious texts and a few subjects related mainly to housekeeping. Education was more prevalent among the Hindus and Sikhs. The religious divide in education was much stronger in the NWFP with Muslim religious leaders disapproving of co-religious education; otherwise the types of schools and curriculum were the same as in the Punjab. The medium of instruction in schools for Hindus was Hindi, in schools for Sikhs it was Gurmukhi and Urdu for Muslims (NWFP Gazetteer 1908).²⁸

²⁸ The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, North-West Frontier Province. 1908. Sang-e-Meel Publications, Lahore. 2002.

Under the British the inspecting staff of the Educational Department comprised of an Inspector General of Education, a personal assistant and four district inspectors. Not all districts had district inspectors, in such cases and especially in tribal areas, headmasters of municipal schools carried out school inspections. Available data shows a much larger number of private schools (744) compared to public schools (206) of various denominations with a total of 26,439 students that is about 8 percent of the school going age children. There were few girls' only schools. Education was coeducational and girls studied mostly in private schools; less than half of the girls in schools were Muslims.

In 1903-04, there were 206 public and 744 private schools in the province. Of the 172 primary schools for boys 145 schools were managed by local bodies, while the remainder comprised of aided and non-aided schools. In addition there were 10 vernacular schools with primary and secondary sections all these were run by local bodies; and there were eight girls schools (4 run by local bodies and 4 were aided schools). The total number of girls enrolled was 578 while girls in private schools numbered 1,721, and in boys' schools 21.

The reluctance of Muslims towards education can be gleaned from the fact that in private schools for the three religious groups, Muslims compared to the other religions formed only one-tenth of the student body. Stipends and special schools were used as an incentive to increase their enrolment. Secondary schools numbered 25, of these 15 were Anglo-Vernacular most of which were maintained by local bodies. It is stated that in 1903 there were 71 matriculates up from 15 in 1891, and 7 students passed the intermediate exam in 1901-02. The province had no university and the one college, Edwardes College, opened in 1901 was affiliated to the Punjab University in Lahore.

Most educational institutions were located in towns or urban areas. In every district the number of educated Sikhs and Hindus was more than the Muslims. The demand for educated personnel came from the medical, military and revenue departments. The largest number of educational institutions was in the Peshawar district, followed by Hazara district. Nevertheless, the district of Peshawar exhibited failure of government public instruction to take root along with the decline in indigenous institutions due to lack of support from government and a tribal system combined with periodic migrations of the people due to

pastoralism resulting in low levels of literacy (North-West Frontier Province Gazetteer 1908). Education in the Tribal Areas was negligible with only the Khurram agency reporting seven indigenous schools.

Table 5: Schools by Districts in NWFP (1903-04)

School Type	Hazara	Peshawar	Kohat	Bannu	D. I. Khan
Literacy (1901)	2.4%	4%	4.2 %	4.1%	-
Primary					
Public	33	78	28	25	-
Private					25
Middle					
Elementary Private	165	208	55	99	-
Secondary/High	6	14	2	4	6
Advanced	18	30		8	
Arts College		1			
Girls				1 missionary	

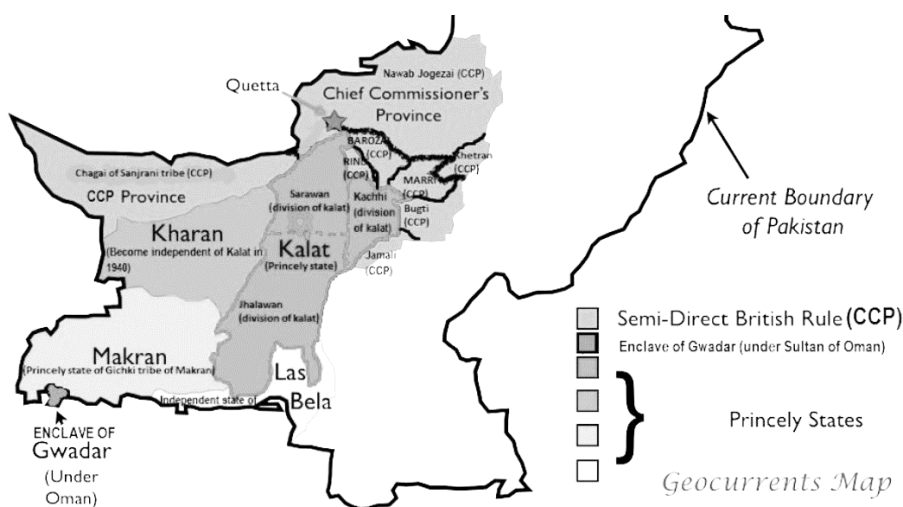
Source: North-West Frontier Province Gazetteer 1908

6.2.4 *Balochistan:* ²⁹

The British recognized the province as having three divisions: British Balochistan, acquired by treaty in 1879 (9,476 sq. miles), Agency Territories at times controlled by British officers (44,345 sq. miles), and Native States of Kalat and Las Bela (78,034 sq. miles). A rough estimate of the population gives a figure of 915,000 people in 1903 with most living in rural areas. The tribal structure, poverty, temporary and periodic migration, poor communications and focus on trading were identified by the British as main characteristics of the province.

²⁹ India, *Provincial Series, Baluchistan Province*, 2002, Sang-e-Meel Publications, Lahore. (Original publication date 1908, Superintendent of Government Printing Calcutta).

Figure 4: Map of Balochistan under the British



Located across the trade routes between Persia, Central Asia and India, the link between trading, urbanization and education is evident in Balochistan. Maritime centers and inland marts or trading centers reported trade in agricultural produce, dried fruit, fish, wool, minerals, crafts and small manufactured goods. Trade was almost entirely in the hands of Hindus.³⁰ Soldiers, clerks, merchants and artisans were temporary migrants from other parts of the subcontinent and were more educated than the local population as were the Hindus compared to Muslims.

In addition to English administrators, British administration required a large number of educated natives for different tasks such as manning the municipal committees and collection of revenue.³¹ To ensure the use of a common language for communication and for writing which required persons with some level of education in at least one language and arithmetic, a Department of Public Instruction was organized in the early 1900s with a common Inspector General for Education for Balochistan and NWFP.

³⁰ Few Muhammadan traders from Kandahar and Khojas along the coast.

³¹ Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, Patwari, etc.

Information on indigenous education is scanty, however it is likely that teaching of religious texts that is the Quran, Veddas and Granths was prevalent, and there is evidence of mosque schools. The British focused on Hindi, Gurmukhi and Urdu as the medium of instruction in primary, middle and secondary schools with English being introduced at the upper primary level. The number of boys' primary schools increased from three in 1891 to 21 in 1903. There was only one secondary school and one Anglo-vernacular middle school. Teachers for these schools had to be recruited from the Punjab. In addition two European schools (one primary the other a middle school) were coeducational. Pushto, Balochi, Brahui, Punjabi, Seraiki, Sindhi and other dialects were spoken in the province as a result only oral literature in the form of songs and stories existed in the local languages. For written correspondence, Persian was used. The only newspaper of the province *The Balochistan Gazette*, was published in English.

Throughout the province Muslims lagged behind in almost all forms of education. Female education was only in Hindi and Gurmukhi indicating that education was not a priority for Muslim girls. Only one school for females was reported in 1891, three in 1901 and four in 1903. Support for schools came from local funds and private bodies. By 1904, Zhob, Loralai and Quetta-Pishin districts had four primary schools each with one of these being for girls. Boys and girls were provided basic or religious education by Maulvis in mosques. Quetta-Pishin district had four mission schools and 12 Government and aided schools. Sibi district had one middle and eight primary schools, one school for native girls and one for European and Eurasian boys and girls. There was only one school in the Marri Bugti area. In Kalat State a large school was to be opened in Mastung, while a few boys were taught in mosque schools and Hindu boys were taught at home. In Las Bela State, religious education by maulvis was the norm for boys.

7. Conclusion

Disregard of the different types of indigenous schools that had provided a link between education and occupation during Mughal and Sikh rule by the British led to a decline in education. The contempt shown by the British for regional and local languages and the shift to English as the preferred medium of instruction added to this decline. Furthermore, replacement of the role of the community in the provision and

management of education by centralized bureaucracies created a distance between schools and their clientele.

Throughout the territory, which more or less constitutes the state of Pakistan, historically of the three religious groups Muslims were the least inclined towards education. At best they acquired basic and religious education imparted in maktabas and mosques. Hindus and Sikhs were more inclined to get secular education along with religious instruction. Consequently, government and private jobs were manned by these two communities thereby forming the bulk of the population living in small towns while Muslims were in the majority in rural areas.

The decision to open schools where the medium of instruction would be English combined with missionary zeal contributed to the establishment of mission schools in all provinces, which provided quality education to the girls and boys of the elite as well as highly placed government servants. Prior to British rule the education of girls was of domestic and familial concern. Some of the government aided schools established by private bodies also flourished. Furthermore, the credit for establishing institutions of higher education inclusive of professional education such as engineering goes to the British. The Government of India Act of 1919 – also known as the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms - was passed to expand the participation of Indians in the government of India. Although the Act failed in its objectives, it did give an impetus to education as all three religious communities developed a greater interest in education as a prelude to getting government jobs. This was aided by the introduction of free compulsory education in some municipalities.

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