

Modernization of Indian Education a case study of Emergence and Development of University of Delhi- I

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Abstract- The colonial rule in India, vicariously considered as a period of modernization, the intervention of colonial agency in matter of social and cultural field of traditional society of India pave the way for transformation of various traditions and customs of the society. The Indian education system underway the major change in 1835, through Macauly minutes of education & introduction of western model of education influences the way of thinking and morals of Indians, a new education system had major effects on indigenous model of education prevalent in pre-colonial era. The present paper study the growth and development of College education in Delhi after 1911, Delhi had been a locus of important oriental educational Centre during early colonial era 1803-57(Delhi College) usually designated as” Delhi Renaissance “but revolt of 1857, had shattered this short-lived educational experiment. The paper will focus on different kinds of attempts to revive educational efflorescence of Delhi when it became new Capital of India, many schemes were announced and finally a University Institution was established after a long deliberation in official circles and, among civil society of Delhi. The first part of the paper will cover the events leading up to the 1930-31when imperial policy regarding higher education for Delhi remained somewhat in doldrums.

Key Words: Delhi University, St. Stephens College, Education Department, Delhi Durbar

INTRODUCTION

The Delhi durbar of 1911 was a phenomenal event, in modern history of Delhi the grandeur and majestic fanfare resulted in popularity of durbar among local citizens, important decision to transfer of capital from Calcutta to Delhi was taken and from the day onwards work was started on establishment of new Capital City in Delhi. The idea to bring capital to Delhi fomented the issue of building an independent University for Delhi, many discussions were going in official circles

about viability of an establishment of an independent University in Delhi. A special announcement was made in Durbar, Rs 40 lakhs were allocated for the advancement of popular education , in 1913 Delhi was created as a Chief Commissioner Province separated from the Punjab and a New Imperial Capital Committee was founded to search for the location of New Capital, meanwhile, it was decided that in order to uphold the high standard of education , new reforms to be taken up, highly emphasized, with effective means of inspection to be promogulated in colleges and University education in Delhi, however the Great War of 1914 delayed the activities for some period.

The Government of India (hereafter GOI) was anxious about the expansive needs of the education of Delhi, an idea was that Delhi should be developed as a” Model Education Conclave” which could later be developed as model for the other provinces to be followed, as educational needs of new capital be catered accordingly, as automatically its population will increase and it need a University for new students as planned it will admit the students from all over India. The college education in Delhi during the First World War period was dominated by the Mission college or popularly called as St. Stephens College, it was a popular and stable institution well-funded by the Mission and GOI grants. The other college, Hindu, at that period wasn’t a stable institution had funded by Delhi city Hindu community’s sponsored subscriptions, third institution which was new to the academic life of Delhi, Ramjas, had just established in 1917, it had various school branches in Delhi city, Ramjas foundation was a Philanthropist institution established by elites of civil society, all three colleges were recognized by Punjab University and grant degree to the admitted students.

THE SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT COLLEGE

In 1917, Saddle Commission proposed the establishment of Government Colleges in different parts of India as a scheme of funding the college education through central funds, so it was decided that Delhi, should have a government college which could later be developed as a nucleus of University, however this idea already have been in the discussion during pre-war years, the scheme been accepted in principle in 1913 but owing to war, scheme been postpended ,so in 1917 this idea again was revived as necessity of expansion of higher education was felt for new Capital. The political environment of the period also prompted the GOI to establish a centrally funded institution at Delhi, because it was clear the modifications in Punjab University Act and implementation of Saddle provisions may result in derecognition of the affiliations of three Delhi Colleges, so opportunity was taken up by GOI to realign the higher education by opening a Government college at Delhi.¹

The autonomy issue was one of main factor of discussion on the foundation of proposed Government college so, it was proposed a Science faculty to be established for 500 students and an Oriental section to be opened in later stages, St. Stephens authorities especially its Principal S. Rudra was of opinion that if proposed college to be open science classes, could be held at the Mission college itself and college compound can be used for the laboratory and practical examinations, but other colleges like Ramjas and Hindu weren't in favor of the amalgamation of their institutions into proposed government college. As policy document it was stated that for proposed Government college the land will be provided by the GOI but private colleges like St. Stephens will remain independent, if Mission collect required Rs 10 lakhs for the new extension and if, Hindu and Ramjas not able to collect it then it could be amalgamated with the proposed Government college.²

Another argument for establishment of Government college was that possibilities of smaller universities in places like Delhi likely to promote the idea of unitary universities in other parts of India, hopefully, Government college at Delhi may become the nucleus of future university, so proposed college alongside the existing colleges in new imperial Capital would be a feasible option for establishment of university without

having extra financial burden on GOI expenditures. Government college's establishment was opposed by the Hindu and Ramjas authorities , their main argument stated that, proposal had not reconsider the autonomy of these two institutions, these institutions were founded by the elite sections of Delhi city, the *Sanatan Dharma Sabha* and *Ramjas society* both represented by the Hindu elites of society, *Ramjas society* had many schools in the city, while *Santan Dharma Sabha* had many shrines associated with the faith especially, Vaish community had Social investment in Hindu college, the college had been one of the important vehicle of Sanatani faith for traditional Hindus of Delhi city who weren't adherents of popular reformist Hindu Sect, Arya Samaj. The Arya Samajists of Delhi city runs many schools for boys and girls, but they weren't enthusiastic about having College for them at Delhi, rather they focused on DAV College at Lahore for higher education and had invested in it, So, the issue of higher education in Delhi had always been debatable among different denominations of Hindu society. There was much resentment among Hindus of city, that Mission college had got more attention from GOI, because of its Christian character(Although it was rumored that St. Stephens work for proselytizing the caste Hindus to Christianity but in reality, exception to a compulsory bible class in Mission college, subjects approved by Punjab University syllabus were taught and results were excellent ,Mission College was very popular among Delhi's Hindu middle classes), it usually got financial aids and required land from the authorities and this favorable attitude was disliked by the elite sections of Hindu society , so on issue of establishment of Government college both these institutions denied to be part of the proposed Government college as it may jeopardized their autonomous character.³

Another problem about government college was that, if college had to founded in Delhi, private colleges had to be disassociated with Punjab University, colleges in Delhi were affiliated to the University and it was really very difficult for authorities to provide viable option for the proposed Government college considering the amalgamation of affiliated private colleges. The meek response and vehemence of civil society towards the proposed Government college forced the authorities to abandon the idea of founding a Government college at Delhi⁴.

A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR DELHI

This idea was mooted by the *Theosophical Society*, a neo-Hindu movement which was very popular in Delhi in early 1900's, it had established a first girl school in Delhi "Indraprastha School" in 1904, its founder Mrs. Annie Besant, a renowned theosophist and a political figure of the period had special interest in alternative education for the Indians. In 1907, she had submitted a memorandum of association on the affairs of university education in India, she was critical of Lord Curzon's policy of educational reforms which made University education very costly for Indians and had fixed the age for the matriculation, she requested for favorable consideration of her appeal by Viceroy. The occurrence of the First World War delayed idea.⁵ In 1916, Annie Beasant become the leader of home rule movement, she envisaged a scheme called "National system of Education "standing apart from government and missionary system". She chose Delhi as the ideal place for such a University and hoped that if scheme get favorable response from the Indians, the branches of University can be opened in others part of India and a "National Association "to be founded for such endeavors, it was proposed that medium of instructions in University be in vernaculars and students be relieved from the English as a subject which according to Beasant "overtakes energy and crams in thoughts "The objective of National Association was establishment of Indian National University in which seven integrated colleges to be established having curriculum focused on literary ,artistic, technical and scientific subjects with special importance being given to Indian knowledge in addition with history, philosophy and Indian literature. Owing to lack of popular support, this idea didn't get much response, after the war, when imperial committee was set up for construction of New Capital , the representatives of " National Association" asked for the grant of land for said proposal but it was rejected on the plea that such Institution without having government control could not have long term viability and governing body having different religious representative bound to have troublesome future and meanwhile political movement in post-1919 phase had incorporated this idea of" National Education" and establishment of such institutions in wake of the rising nationalism was a matter of great concern for GOI, So, it was rejected by the Imperial Committee and later Annie Beasant

took this project to Benares and amalgamated it with the Benares Hindu University established by Madan Mohan Malviya.⁶

After abandonment of government college scheme, the GOI placed the idea of a unitary teaching University to be founded at Delhi, a plan was sketched out tentatively , a University institution may be develop, it was contemplated that existing colleges in Delhi city would transform them into intermediate institutions but ,could continue, so far as degree classes were concerned as the integral part of the University including buildings, laboratories and lecture halls to be erected at suitable sites. Other reason prevailed behind decision that there was danger that, so called national institutions which were budding as an important plank of ongoing national movement, might move to Delhi which could lead to disastrous consequences for morale of the disciplines in colleges of Delhi and under this apprehension it was decided that the creation of a unitary University at Delhi may ward off this danger.⁷

THE UNIVERSITY AND OFFICIAL CAULDRON

In 1919, Montague Chelmsford reforms were announced by which education became a transferred subject, Punjab University become a centrally autonomous institution and affiliated colleges had to be remodeled according to the needs of the University and there was uneasiness among the three affiliated colleges at Delhi, if these could not fulfill the norms what would be future for them, meanwhile issue was discussed in detail at Central Legislative Assembly.

The matter regarding the establishment of university been discussed in official circles in various meetings chaired by education secretary and long arguments were taken up subsequently by the members, Sir Muhammed Shafi, the education member, argued in favor of a establishment of teaching and unitary university at Delhi, he stated" that from educational point of view, Delhi's glorious past in education be revered ,for centuries it had been the intellectual center of India, now restored as capital of India it should have its own university. Besides he argued that between Allahabad and Lahore, there was no government college or University, Aligarh MAO College had just been granted status of a university so insufficient university institutions had been there in the region. Delhi had been a big commercial center and now become Capital so it should be provided with a

university, Calcutta and Dhaka which are smaller than Delhi had been provided with universities, so a university institution in this part going to benefit the people of this region. Shafi urged the GOI to introduce reforms in Delhi that will serve as model for the other provinces to replicate".⁸

In continuation of discussions in official circles, in December, 1919 a meeting held, after prolonged discussion between officials of education department and resolution was passed that a unitary teaching university should be established, this scheme consisting of two parts provisional and permanent, the former described existing colleges with their hostels would remain in existing quarters. Ramjas would be an intermediate college, while St. Stephens and Hindu would, as far as possible and desirable, have common classes for graduate teaching. An additional professor would be appointed for special tutoring in honors and postgraduate work.⁹

The scheme envisaged that a model University in Delhi would not be more expensive than a Government college, and St. Stephens might serve as the nucleus of the new university, teaching and residential in character, to sort out the problems of the two colleges, assurance was given that representative bodies or governing bodies of these colleges would have 2/3rd members of the different denominations, after scabblings and settlement, the education department, GOI began formal drafting of the bill but again debate ensued in the Central legislative Assembly, the non-Indian members of viceroy's executive council raised objections, stating that scheme was premature and GOI unnecessarily planning project having involvement of such heavy expenditure in times of severe financial stringency another argument against university was that there were many universities nearby so students from Delhi could either join Agra college or newly consecrated AMU at Aligarh and opposed idea of any communal representation in governing bodies of existed colleges as well as in Court and Executive Council of the university as had been proposed in draft.¹⁰

The Indian members countered the claims of the non-Indian members in the council. Mohammed Shafi, in his reply to objections stated that "reorganization of the Punjab University could exclude Delhi colleges from affiliation of the Punjab University which may affect the future of the Delhi students and could be a setback for the higher education in new imperial

capital. Secondly, he counters the argument that India had too many universities, he stated in comparison to India Japan, Britain, and Germany had more universities compared to their population, Punjab University which catered the needs of Delhi colleges hadn't been equipped with resources and not sufficient for the needs of such large population". Tej Bahadur Sapru, another member of the assembly suggested in proposed university, "the stress should be on scientific and commercial subjects, as present universities are multiplying the Arts and Law graduates, he further states, proposed University must not replicate the model of Dhaka or Lucknow Universities".¹¹

The Governor General Council (Lord Reading) placed the proposal before Standing finance Committee and Rs.75000 grant was approved, Secretary, Henry Sharp, assured the house that issue of intermediary classes would be resolved and colleges would be relocated, and Lady Harding Medical College would remain with the Punjab University till the medical faculty be opened at university. The Bill for Delhi university was introduced in Central Assembly on January, 1922 and finally Delhi University was opened in 1st, May, 1922, by a Government Act, a notification was issued regarding the appointment of Dr. Hari Singh Gaur a distinguish Lawyer of Nagpur as First Vice Chancellor of University. The faculty of Arts and Science having 8 departments Arabic, Chemistry, Economics, English, History, Persians, Physics and Sanskrit established having around 750 students, and 3 Constituents colleges become part of the Delhi University. The principal administrative authorities under the Act were the Court, the Executive council and Academic council.¹²

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DELHI UNIVERSITY: THE MYTH

The establishment of University at Delhi had to face difficulties in early years, in early 1923, the Incheape retrenchment committee recommend that there is no need for the University in Delhi at this time, so scheme for formation of University be reconsidered, in defense of continuation of University a memorandum was issued which stated that New Capital Committee had made provision for land being given to University which had to be constructed for new Capital of India, it would be bad idea if university project be shelved, so finally matter discussed in Assembly and on

March, 1923 and decision was taken in favor of continuance of the university and decide to allocate the funds from the central revenues.

The first examinations were held successfully in 1923-24 session and convocation held smoothly, now continuance of University become prestige issue for GOI, in another development a philanthropist of Delhi city, G. D. Birla announced Rs. 500 chairs in economics for furtherance of the specialization in the subject, the developments in academic fields led to foundation of Law faculty and addition of intermediate colleges such as Indraprastha, Ramjas, Anglo Sanskrit and Anglo Arabic. By, 1924-25, 4 intermediate colleges were added to the Delhi University. The Chancellor Lord Reading instituted a committee of 8 members after the first convocation of the University.¹³

In 1926-27, University had to come across the first financial crisis, as it was fully dependent on the financial grants from GOI, the Rs 85000 grant was demanded but GOI suggested that such heavy grant wasn't available, so a committee was formed to look into the financial issue and the permanent site for the University, many suggestions came forward to analyze the issue the first suggestion was that if grants from princely states as in the case of Aligarh university come up then it may resolve the issue, second, if teaching unitary model be altered in favor of the affiliating type then intermediate colleges may retain their status and university can take classes in science subject, third, degree colleges can revert back to Punjab university but that would be regressive decision for the future of the university, the decision to continue the university finally came into forefront in 1927-28 session of Central Assembly debates, when it was decided that University at Delhi might be retained by making favorable amendments in character of the university.¹⁴

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DELHI UNIVERSITY: THE REALITY

Meanwhile, the question of site allocation to the University became one of the focal points, as from the beginning the University has been shifted to many sites, in 1926 it was running from a makeshift building at Curzon Road. So, the site committee had to review the various locations suggested by the Imperial Committee in previous years, the following sites were suggested to relocate and provide land to the colleges.

1. The Viceregal Estate
2. The Metcalf House
3. The Tis Hazari Grounds
4. The Alipore House
5. The Kashmiri Gate Grounds
6. Lady Hardinge Grounds

The members of committee inspected the different sites and review them accordingly, the Metcalf house was very much suitable for the transfer of colleges and administrative buildings but due to closeness of Yamuna River and marshy environs the site, was rejected on the grounds that future expansion wasn't possible at the site. The Kashmiri gate grounds area was rejected on the plea that it lays close to the congested city of Delhi, so not feasible to transfer the University at the spot because in early days the University used rented buildings near Ritz Cinema for its operation which wasn't a comfortable spot for the students and faculties. The Tis Hazari grounds could not be earmarked for the University because it was the only recreational place for the people of Delhi City, Lady Hardinge grounds wasn't suitable as it needs its own extension process. The Alipore house, despite its suitability, can't be used as it has already been negotiated for the transfer of Indraprastha College.¹⁵ The Committee finally earmarked the old Viceregal Estate for the permanent site for the University, it was found that some buildings after renovations and small changes could well be used for administrative and laboratory purposes. The committee summarizes the following points about accommodation and subject modification for the Delhi University.

1. The intermediate classes should remain a part of the University and each college should maintain the classes accordingly and appoint the teachers recognized by the university.
2. The Instructions in BA course expect in science subject should be left to the colleges, in sciences University may take responsibility for the teaching and appoint the Professors for the cause.
3. The college representatives should be excluded from the selection process and their function should be confined to the recognition of Intermediate and BA Courses.
4. The committee also suggested University should appoint the eminent Professors having high academic qualifications who would be in position to direct and influence the teaching in colleges.

5. The Indraprastha and Anglo Arabic Colleges may be added as intermediate colleges in university and later may be recognized as degree colleges.¹⁶

By the time these recommendations were submitted to the GOI, the latter's role in educational institutions was changed significantly because of the 1919 Reforms. The "Subject of education" became a provincial transferred subject, which meant that the Government of India now did not influence the educational policy of the provinces, and no general supervision was performed by the Central Government, the minister of education was elected in the provinces through the Legislative Assembly polls. The function of the Educational Commissioner remained unchanged but his intervention in the province's educational matters was reduced. When this report was submitted to the GOI, the educational commissioner R. Littlehailes, clarified that the University of Delhi would be controlled by the Central Government despite the reforms. He clarified that the University of Delhi stood vis-à-vis the Government of India in the same relationship as other provincial universities to local governments. The head of the Central Government, the Governor-general-in-Council was the chancellor of the university. All the statutes and rules framed by the university authorities were subject to approval or veto of the Governor-General-in-council.¹⁷

He emphasized that a university for the imperial capital should not be treated as existing on sufferance and on the charity of government but developed an institution for whose good name and future success the Government of India was solely responsible, a responsibility which the Government assumed when the Delhi University Act was passed. The report of the committee included proposals about financial resources which were forwarded to the Finance Department for approval.

1. The Viceregal Lodge Estate to be allocated to Delhi University in due course.
2. When and as funds become available, sufficient to be given to enable starting the set out in the report of the committees.
3. The Finance Department pointed out that if the compromise between the Finance Department and university worked satisfactorily, there be nothing to force the university to develop on lines running contrarily to its principles. He also stated that the Government of India had been connected very

closely with the Delhi University. Lord Reading in his Convocation address in 1926 had emphasized this connection and said, "Delhi University should give expression to the close concern of the Viceroy and Governor-General-in-Council for the moral and intellectual progress of India."¹⁸

The Delhi University enquiry committee in 1927, was appointed to sort out the matters associated with financial and site issue, the committee recommends the following suggestions in case regarding the continuance or closure of the university as GOI had reservations about the financial burden on maintenance of the university. A scheme of reorganization with three options was prepared by the education department, GOI.

1. The science department in university may develop on self-finance basis having residence for science students and GOI will maintain it.
2. The university's status may be reduced to affiliating and examining and a degree giving institution.
3. In case, lack of support and enthusiasm shown by the colleges in having teaching and residential character and inability to have self-supporting finances, it's to be declared redundant it as it was impossible for GOI to provide financial support for continuance of the university.¹⁹

It was a crisis like situation and panic spread among officials, so discussion ensued many alternative were bring out, Vice chancellor and his office put forwards arguments in defense of university, it was stated that closure of the university can only be done by the Indian legislatures, in a memorandum issued, it was stated that "Since four and five years after establishment of university the numbers of students have increased enormously, numbers of colleges are adding on, girls education too become popular, the memorandum further states that university had been doing social utility work for the considerable population of imperial capital city and discontinuance of university might result in downgrading of the prestige and power of the GOI."²⁰

So, by 1930-31 the university's future hangs precariously, as future of central assistance to the university depends on the financial approval of GOI, the issue was now taken up to the Viceroy's executive council for further consideration and final decision for continuance of the university.

CONCLUSION

The matter of continuance of Delhi university became one of the prestige issues for the GOI, as rising tide of nationalism in India had prompt the GOI to resolve the matter amicably regarding the higher education in Delhi, as Gandhian nationalism was too critical of the western model of education imposed by the colonialism. In 1929, Hartog committee report submitted to GOI proposed more efforts on advancing the mass education rather than focusing on the higher education and report was critically analyzed by the Congress and Gandhi, his rhetoric about the report and stress on the alternative model of education for the Indians, it prompted GOI to take matter urgently to resolve the crisis, So, by 1931-32 the Delhi University fate hangs in crisis and its future depends on the positive decision taken up by the GOI. In the next article we would like to review the future of Delhi University in coming years and this matter was resolved by the efforts of GOI.

END NOTES

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- [2] National Archives of India Proceeding: Department of Education, File No. 112,1919, pp.10-11, Extract of letter from S.K. Rudra, Principal, St. Stephens College to Henry Sharp. Education Secretary, GOI.
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- [18] Ibid: pp. 42-45.
- [19] Ibid: pp. 42-45.
- [20] Report of the special committee for Delhi University on (Delhi University Enquiry Committee 1927), 1930-31, pp.210-214.