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Despite going through numerous education reforms during British Colonial rule, why does India still experience low literacy rates and poor institutional health?

By

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[Abstract]

Many reforms have been concluded in India during British Colonial rule however India still has not succeeded in the provision of valuable education across all strata of the society. A lot has been written on the topic and it seems the end conclusion is that British Colonial rule is did not have sufficient fund and personnel to cater the vast county's needs. Even worse, the gap between rich and poor has been widened by providing education to wealthy Indians that would be then able to implement Western ideas to locals.

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# 1 Introduction

Education is explicitly referenced under the category of human capital, but its importance extends beyond that, encompassing a substantial role in product processes and product innovation. The interplay between education, capital intensity, technological advancements, and efficiency gains is intricate and interconnected (Wobbekind, 2012). Academic studies indicate that there is a robust correlation between an individual's level of education and their earnings (Card, 1999). The "earnings premium" is evident across all educational levels, and a single extra year of postsecondary education results in higher income (The White House, 2010). Education plays a pivotal role in the development of a country, by influencing various aspects such as economic growth, poverty reduction, trade, technology, health, income distribution, and social cohesion. It serves as the foundation upon which economic and social well-being is built, providing the necessary skills, knowledge, and capabilities for individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing world. By improving labour productivity, education contributes to raising individuals out of poverty and enhancing their economic prospects. It equips the workforce with the necessary tools to adapt to evolving technologies and production methods, ensuring competitiveness in the global marketplace. Additionally, education fosters intellectual flexibility, promoting innovation and creativity that drive economic progress. Beyond its economic impact, it plays a critical role in social development by facilitating nation-building by encouraging a sense of unity and understanding among diverse social and ethnic groups. By promoting early integration and interpersonal tolerance, education contributes to the formation of cohesive and inclusive societies (Ozturk, 2001).

In the context of this thesis, India has been selected as the focal country for examining the intricate interplay between education, equal access to education, equal access to opportunities, and institutional prosperity. While India underwent several educational reforms during the period of British colonial rule, that are to be later discussed, it still faces challenges in terms of its institutional health. Despite the introduction of educational systems and structures by the British, the legacy of colonialism and subsequent developments have left India with a complex landscape that requires continuous efforts to ensure optimal educational outcomes. Consequently, it is crucial to examine the factors contributing to the specific circumstances observed in the development of Indian institutions. Having in mind that India has gone through educational reforms during British colonial rule, it shows a relatively low total adult literacy rate when compared to China, around 74% and 97% respectively, for the year 2018 (The World Bank, 2023).

Japan pioneered the Asian Development paradigm, characterized by a close 'business' and 'government' alliance and strong export focus. Subsidies boosted exporting firms, while households saved with low interest returns, benefiting enterprises through banks. Government-backed business groups flourished, and this model extended across East and Southeast Asia, albeit with decreasing success further westward. In South Asia—Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and India—the growth gap widened, and 'state'-'business' collaboration waned. Despite India's vast size, per capita income, and human development lag significantly (Desai, 2020).

Buddhism, both a significant religion and critic of Hinduism, opposed the caste system and elaborate rituals prescribed by the Vedas. It advocated public education and differed from Hinduism's caste-based educational privilege and trade association with the Vaishya caste. The exclusion of education for the Shudra, Dalits, and untouchables further underscored this disparity. During the East India Company's early rule in Bengal, Sir William Jones discovered linguistic connections between Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Persian, forming the Indo-European Group. This notion flattered the Indian elite, fostering a sense of affiliation with Europe. Muslim rulers in North India from 1250 to 1750 refrained

from altering Hindu society. British attempts at reforming practices like the Sati system halted after the 1857 uprising. A pivotal transformation in India stemmed from the gradual introduction of modern Western education, accessible to all castes, although initially favoring the upper strata. Individuals such as D. Ambedkar, a Dalit, would have found educational advancement challenging without the British administration's influence. Following independence, India embarked on three conflicting trajectories. Embracing universal adult franchise marked a revolutionary stride towards political equality, despite an inherently unequal society. Social reforms, especially in North India, were hesitant, particularly concerning caste disparities. Although reservations were implemented for Dalits and Tribals in government roles, the pervasive illiteracy issue, particularly among women in the densely populated Hindi belt, remained unattended. Educational investments disproportionately favored elite institutions, neglecting the need for widespread accessibility (Desai, 2020).

India is one of the world's fastest-growing large economies, however, despite the educational reforms that took place during British colonial times, it holds the 131st position among 188 countries according to the UNDP's Human Development Index. While certain regions of the country have made impressive advancements in socio-economic indicators, there are other areas that are significantly lagging behind. Substantial disparities are evident in the attainment of outcomes both among different states and within states themselves (Prasad, 2018).

During the period of British colonial rule, India witnessed the introduction of modern education. Before the British arrived, India had its own educational systems like Gurukulas and Madrassas. Education holds immense power as a means to unlock the gateway to freedom and has the potential to bring about transformative change on a global scale. However, under British rule in India, their policies and actions undermined the existing traditional educational institutions, leading to the creation of a subordinate class. To accomplish this objective, the British implemented various laws with the intention of imprinting English values and ideals upon the Indian educational landscape (Grover, 2023). The scope of this paper is to examine the reforms hinted by Grover and whether they have attempted to assist the intellectual, cultural, and economic development of the Indian people, or bluntly make Indian people English. Therefore, the research question is: How come India has an unstable development process despite having gone through several educational system reforms through the colonial era?

A finding that occurs while conducting research for this thesis is that education, equal access to education, and equal access to opportunities are intricately intertwined concepts. They form a reciprocal relationship, where education serves as a means to achieve equal access to opportunities, and equal access to education is essential for promoting equal access to opportunities. By recognizing and addressing the interplay between these concepts, societies can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive future for all individuals.

In the following sections of this thesis, I will delve into a comprehensive exploration of the topic at hand. The next section will provide a theoretical framework that will lay the foundation for the analysis. It will then proceed to the chapter on literature review, where relevant existing research and scholarly works will be examined. Subsequently, the empirical findings derived from our analysis will be presented. Finally, we will draw upon these findings to formulate a conclusive statement in the concluding section. Through this structured approach, it is aimed to provide a thorough understanding of the subject matter and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

This thesis is relying on the works of Amartya Sen and Branko Milanovic to help answer my research question regarding India's inability to grow prosperous institutions, foster equality among individuals, and equal opportunities in education, despite having gone through many education reforms during British colonial rule. The base for the theoretical framework of this thesis will be the works of Milanovic (*The Haves and the Have-Nots*, 2011) and Sen (*Development as Freedom*), which will help us conceptualize how certain freedoms such as access to basic education can lead to a more equal and developed society. Drawing upon established theories and frameworks from various disciplines such as economics, sociology, and development studies, this section provides a comprehensive theoretical perspective for analyzing the intricate relationship between educational reforms and development outcomes. Theoretical concepts related to economic growth, human capital formation, social mobility, institutional dynamics, and governance will be explored to gain insights into the underlying causes of instability in the development process. Reforms will be discussed in a later section of this thesis and Milanovic's and Sen's ideas will help me understand through the lens of equality and developmental freedoms whether they were successful in establishing education facilities and promoting sustainable education equally throughout the whole India, or were they lacking these aspects. Did the British Crown instead, further increase inequality between groups of individuals?

Sen (1999) writes that in both affluent and impoverished nations, a multitude of challenges, encompassing both longstanding and emerging issues, persist. These challenges encompass enduring poverty and unmet basic needs, the occurrence of famines and pervasive hunger, the infringement upon fundamental political freedoms and civil liberties, the substantial disregard for the interests and empowerment of women, and the escalating threats to our environment and the sustainability of our economic and social well-being. Many of these forms of deprivation can be observed across countries, regardless of their wealth or economic status.

Sen's main idea is that, in order to overcome the above-mentioned issues, individual freedom must be seen as social commitment. In this perspective, the expansion of freedom is considered both the ultimate goal and the primary method of development. Development entails eliminating different forms of limitations that restrict people's choices and hinder their ability to act based on their own reasoning. According to this view, genuine development is achieved through the removal of significant constraints on freedom, as it is these constraints that shape the very essence of development. The fundamental significance of human freedom, as a fundamental goal of development, is greatly enhanced by the instrumental effectiveness of specific freedoms in fostering other types of freedoms.

Taking a human-centric approach to development diverges from narrower perspectives that equate development solely with the increase in gross national product, personal incomes, industrialization, technological advancements, or social modernization. While the growth of GNP or individual incomes can be crucial in expanding people's freedoms, the realization of freedoms is also influenced by other factors. These include social and economic structures such as access to education and healthcare, as well as political and civil rights such as the freedom to engage in public discourse and scrutiny. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of development recognizes the multifaceted nature of freedoms and the various determinants that contribute to their attainment. The ability of individuals to accomplish positive outcomes is shaped by a combination of economic opportunities, political freedoms, social capabilities, and the favourable conditions of good health, fundamental education, and the support and promotion of initiatives. The institutional frameworks that facilitate these opportunities are also influenced by the exercise of people's freedoms, granting them the

liberty to engage in social choices and contribute to public decision-making processes that drive the advancement of these opportunities.

Sen provides an example of the idea of “development as freedom”. In the context of narrower perspectives on development, which focus on GNP growth or industrialization, there is often a question about whether specific political or social freedoms, such as the freedom of political participation and dissent, or access to basic education, are supportive of development (Sen, 1999), which is the desired direction of research in this thesis. However, from the broader standpoint of development as freedom, this way of framing the question tends to overlook the crucial understanding that these substantive freedoms, such as political participation, basic education, or access to healthcare, are integral elements of development itself. They are not external factors that influence development, but rather intrinsic components that contribute to its essence (Sen, 1999).

Milanovic (2011) on the other hand, decides to pick up the concept of inequalities which can be related to the freedoms discussed by Amartya Sen. In his book, there are three types of inequalities stated: inequality among individuals in a given society, inequality between nations, and global inequality. He states that one way economists look at inequality is by asking: Does a high or low level of inequality benefit economic growth, governance improvement, foreign investment attraction, education dissemination among the population, and similar factors? The research question, is intended to be answered using such theories, since failure to reach a successful developmental process will be examined through the lens of functioning institutions and how these were influenced by the freedoms and inequalities, in this case, right and access to basic education and education system reforms.

Kuznets put forth the argument that inequality among individuals is not uniformly constant across all types of societies but rather follows a predictable pattern as a society evolves. According to him, in very impoverished societies, inequality tends to be low due to the majority of the population earning just enough to subsist, resulting in minimal economic differentiation among individuals. However, as an economy progresses and people transition from agricultural work to industrial employment, Kuznets proposed that a disparity emerges in average earnings between industrial workers (who become relatively wealthier) and farmers (who remain comparatively poorer). Moreover, within the industrial sector, there is a greater divergence in income levels among individual workers due to the increased variety of tasks demanded by modern industries. Consequently, income inequality escalates due to both the widening gap in average earnings between industry and agriculture and the growing disparity among industrial workers themselves (Kuznets, 1955).

Milanovic writes that in societies that have reached a higher level of advancement, a notable shift occurs where the state assumes a redistributive function, education becomes more widely accessible (which in the case of India does not seem to be true as will be further shown), and as a result, inequality begins to decrease. Milanovic refers to this as the commonly known "Kuznets' hypothesis," which posits an inverted U-shaped curve representing the trajectory of income inequality during the course of economic development. According to this hypothesis, inequality initially tends to rise before eventually declining. Ideally, it is expected to be most effective when analyzing the progression of inequality within a single country, particularly during periods of profound transition from an agricultural-based economy to an industrialized one, and subsequently to a service-oriented economy. However, its application in this context has yielded mixed results, as certain countries and specific time periods have demonstrated an inverted U-shaped pattern of inequality, while others have not followed this pattern. However, numerous economists contended that incorporating supplementary factors such as financial depth of an economy, openness etc., could enhance our comprehension of how inequality evolves. For instance, the underlying reasoning



was that a more effective and expansive financial sector would enable economically disadvantaged individuals to secure loans for financing their own education. This, in turn, would contribute to a reduction in inequality, as the avenues for educational advancement would become accessible to all members of society, rather than being reserved solely for the affluent. Enhanced trade liberalization is expected to have a complex impact on inequality in less developed nations. It is postulated that in such countries, increased openness to trade would lead to a reduction in inequality by stimulating demand for products that rely on low-skilled labour, such as textiles, which are often the specialization of these nations. As a result, the wages of unskilled workers would tend to rise relative to the wages of skilled workers or the profits earned by capitalists. However, the relationship between trade openness and inequality is multifaceted and influenced by various contextual factors, making the overall effect less straightforward to ascertain (Milanovic, 2011).

Distinguishing between "good" and "bad" inequality is analogous to differentiating between good and bad cholesterol. Just as good cholesterol plays a vital role in promoting health, certain forms of inequality can serve as a necessary impetus for individuals to pursue education, work diligently, or engage in entrepreneurial ventures. However, there comes a point, which is challenging to precisely define, where inequality transitions from being a motivational force to becoming a means of perpetuating entrenched positions. This occurs when wealth or income inequality is employed to impede beneficial political changes in society, such as agrarian reform or the abolition of slavery, or when it restricts access to education and reserves the best employment opportunities exclusively for the affluent. Such practices undermine economic efficiency. When an individual's access to quality education is disproportionately contingent upon their parents' wealth, society is effectively deprived of the skills and knowledge possessed by a significant segment of its population (Milanovic, 2011).

In the short and medium term, our ability to significantly influence the distribution of financial assets is limited. However, we have the power to shape the distribution of education, which economists refer to as "human capital." Therefore, there is a strong emphasis on improving access to education for all individuals. This emphasis stems not only from the inherent value of education itself, or its direct contribution to economic growth, but also from the understanding that a more equitable distribution of education can lead to a more balanced distribution of pre-tax income. As a result, even individuals with relatively lower income levels would carefully consider the implications before supporting high tax rates. By addressing educational disparities, we aim to create a society where opportunities are more fairly distributed, fostering a sense of economic empowerment and personal agency for individuals across different socioeconomic backgrounds (Milanovic, 2011).

Moreover, Milanovic writes that in order for economic growth to occur at a rapid pace in advanced stages of development, it is essential to ensure widespread access to education. The availability of education to a large segment of the population becomes synonymous with reducing levels of inequality. This suggests that a well-educated society is not only crucial for fostering individual prosperity and well-being, but it also serves as a catalyst for overall economic advancement.

## 2.1 Towards an Analytical Framework

Now that the foundation has been established, we can see how the question at hand, "How come India has an unstable development process despite having gone through several educational system reforms during British colonial period?" can be answered using the above Theoretical Framework. The concept of access to basic education leading to higher access to opportunities and healthier institutions will be examined using the theoretical substructure set by Milanovic and Sen. As stated earlier, individual freedom must be seen as a social commitment according to Sen (1999). Moreover, education is a social freedom and intrinsic component contributing to development. The empirical

evidence will be tackled when thinking about education as a freedom and the theoretical framework derived from Sen. Have the reforms realized a positive outcome? Have only religious values been taught? Has education become of a nature that is constructive and births capabilities and opportunities?

Milanovic claims that there is a degree of inequality which in fact stimulates individuals to pursue education and work more diligently. However, there is a breaking point that it becomes harmful for fostering development. Milanovic's ideas will be used to attack the empirical evidence by asking whether the reforms allowed for education to be dispersed all over Indian population, or was it concentrated in the higher strata of society? Did the education reforms spread equally among individuals with divergent social circumstances?

### 3 Literature Review

The Literature Review chapter of this thesis delves into a comprehensive exploration of the existing body of knowledge and scholarly work related to the multifaceted themes of education, governance, and socio-economic dynamics in the South Asian context, followed by a deeper analysis on India. By critically examining relevant studies, theories, and empirical evidence, this chapter aims to identify gaps, patterns, and trends that will inform the subsequent analysis and discussion. Through an organized synthesis of literature, this section lays the foundation for a sound understanding of the complexities surrounding the equal promotion of quality education and what were that pre-conditions in the region, for example, the state of education before British Rule. Throughout this thesis, it is essential to bear in mind that the modern-day countries we now recognize as distinct entities [Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma)] were once encompassed within the broader scope of colonial India under British rule. The historical context of this unified region should be considered when interpreting the developments and influences explored in the following chapters.

#### 3.1 The South Asian Region

Attention is directed towards the South Asian region due to its countries' complexity, diversity, but also similarity in terms of education, history, religion, etc. I have chosen to pay closer attention to India because of reforms as previously mentioned. It is captivating to try and understand why so many efforts have not had the according rewarding outcome where people end up better educated, with greater opportunities, more independent. And again, how come numerous reforms were made during colonial time, and still India suffers from economic instability, inequality, and institutional decay?

This section will begin with a broader introduction of the South Asian region in terms of education, inequalities, and socio-economic abilities and will then dive into a discussion about India specifically. The choice of medium of instruction and language policy carry substantial importance in the region's politics, education policies, and curriculum frameworks, although reaching a consensus on these matters proves challenging (Sarangapani and Pappou, 2021). Sarangapani and Pappou (2021) have laid out a definition of the region, encompassing its geographical boundaries, cultural intricacies, and socio-economic dynamics. Except for Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan, which were under the protection or had treaties with the British, the remaining seven countries (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) in the region were colonized and formed part of the British Indian Empire. The existing administrative and legal institutions in South Asian countries today, the development of their modern education systems, and the prominence of English in education and public life all stem from the colonial heritage. Several countries in South Asia have a diverse range of languages, with official recognition given to two or more languages. English holds a

prominent position across the region, playing a significant role in education and increasingly in employment opportunities. Language-related identity politics have had a notable impact and have even sparked conflicts, as seen in Sri Lanka and within India where state divisions often align with linguistic boundaries. The influence of efforts to uphold dominant identities within South Asian countries is evident in their school textbooks and national education policies. Moreover, the sex ratio of individuals with at least some secondary education in the region is 0.66 females per male, which is lower compared to the global average of 0.88. This disparity indicates the presence of gender-based discrimination in the region (UNDP, 2019). The caste system, a hierarchical social structure consisting of endogamous groups and including "untouchable" castes at the lowest level, is a significant aspect of social organization in India and Nepal. Caste and gender are the primary forms of inequality in the region, despite being unconstitutional, as they have religious and cultural acceptance. The constitution in each country addresses these inequalities, including those related to disabilities, and affirmative policies and actions are implemented to varying extents. In India, for example, affirmative action based on caste is provided, with scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes receiving educational, employment, and political representation benefits. In Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, the representation of women in politics has been significantly improved through reservations at the local and national levels. Additionally, despite India and Sri Lanka recognizing minority and cultural rights, including education and the choice of medium of instruction, a significant portion of the population in the region faces multiple disadvantages resulting from intersecting identities of class, caste, and gender, contributing to inequality and low levels of development. These socioeconomic inequalities impact a substantial proportion of the population and play a crucial role in shaping the overall development outcomes in the region (Sarangapani and Pappou, 2021).

### 3.2 Education in South Asia

In the following part, education in the South Asian region is going to be taken into account. Sarangapani and Pappou mention that the depiction of South Asia's education landscape, as revealed in annual reports such as the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA/GMR), reveals a mixed picture. While certain aspects of education have witnessed improvements, there are lingering challenges and shortcomings in many other areas, and there is a consistent emphasis on the necessity for policy and institutional reforms, as well as local and global initiatives, to address the needs of the South Asian region. Beteille et al. write, given that South Asia comprises 40% of the global school-age population and 34% of the youth population aged between 15 and 24 years, the significance of this emphasis becomes apparent on a global scale (Beteille et al., 2020). With the exception of Afghanistan and Pakistan, primary school enrollment rates in South Asian countries surpass 90%. Remarkable progress in school education infrastructure and accessibility has been observed across all countries in the region since the 1990s. According to Unesco (2015), the South Asian region has indeed witnessed one of the most substantial improvements in adjusted net enrolment ratio (ANER) for primary education globally. From 1999 to 2012, the ANER increased significantly from 78% to 94%, highlighting a remarkable rise, with Pakistan showing the slowest progress in terms of gains, while Nepal, Bhutan, and India have experienced the most significant advancements in this regard. Despite these notable accomplishments, there remain considerable disparities in both access to and completion of education. While overall school enrolment rates are impressive, they are accompanied by significant dropout rates and a substantial number of out-of-school children. Among the larger countries in the region, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have the highest populations of out-of-school and illiterate individuals. Female adult literacy in the region remains low at 65%, compared to the global average of 83%, and although gender disparities have been diminishing, significant regional variations persist (Sarangapani and Pappou, 2021).

Besides, previous analyses have identified three primary forms of educational provision: (i) government-funded, (ii) voluntary/charitable/NGO-based (nongovernmental organization), and (iii) private (which encompasses market-oriented or commercial/for-profit entities). These analyses shed light on the inadequate state provision for education as a public good, while also raising concerns about private providers that either catered exclusively to the elite or treated education as a commodity for commercial purposes, neglecting its public significance. Throughout much of the previous century, nations in the region pursued educational development with a primarily nationalist focus during the post-independence era. This was driven by a collective determination to overcome the cultural and economic impacts of colonization, while also establishing a cohesive national identity. Until the past decade, education was not considered a fundamental right in the majority of countries in the region. The educational policies of these nations have prioritized objectives such as fostering comprehensive personal development, cultivating self-sufficiency, promoting social cohesion, justice, and equity, and delivering education that is culturally relevant and imparted in local languages. As stated by Dore (1997), these educational policies were formulated in response to various challenges, including addressing the elitism associated with colonial English-medium education, moving away from rote learning approaches, combating the overemphasis on obtaining diplomas, and addressing the prevalence of private tutoring. Each of these nations has emphasized the importance of fostering a strong and cohesive cultural and social identity while also maintaining their distinctiveness. In line with this, the state has provided significant support for higher education, particularly in the fields of science and technology, to enable these newly independent nations to achieve self-sufficiency and overcome the disadvantages and dependencies inherited from the colonial era (Sarangapani and Pappou, 2021).

A final takeaway from the introductory chapter of Sarangapani and Pappou (2021) in the Handbook of Education Systems in South Asia, is that the establishment and structure of the modern education system in the region can be traced back to the colonial era. During this time, the system heavily favoured English and Western knowledge, science, and technology, while undermining the existing indigenous knowledge systems, society, and culture. The colonial policies had a profound impact on both the indigenous village schools and knowledge systems, limiting their resources, credibility, and accessibility. The nationalist movements for independence not only criticized the colonial education system but also sought to reform it, aiming to educate citizens who would contribute to nation-building and economic productivity. Despite these influences, some indigenous systems managed to survive and even underwent modernization and reinvention. Today, the South Asian educational landscape is multifaceted, encompassing modern schools and universities dedicated to universal knowledge, as well as local traditions in arts, crafts, medicine, architecture, and ecology. Additionally, religious schools and institutions of expertise, such as those focusing on medicinal knowledge, music, and performing arts, continue to hold significance in the social, cultural, and productive realms.

### 3.3 Modern India

According to Sanyal (1996, p. 49) during the 1800s, colonialism established the guidelines and limitations for educational endeavors. Kumar (2021) writes that the establishment of the British colonial state had an immediate impact on Sanskrit and Arabic education, leading to the rise in the importance of the English language as a valuable economic and social asset. It took nearly a century for the East India Company and the subsequent British monarchy to transition from reluctantly recognizing and supporting traditional educational institutions to abandoning them in favor of English language-based institutions. The East India Company established several schools in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, including the Calcutta Madrasah in 1781, the Benares Sanskrit College

in 1791, and the Sanskrit College in Calcutta in 1824. These institutions were initially focused on training individuals in law and language skills. Additionally, the College of Fort William was founded in 1800 to educate East India Company officers about Indian languages and cultures. These schools played a significant role in introducing orientalist learning, covering subjects such as Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and regional languages. The development of textbooks, curricula, and a foundational canon for each language was a crucial aspect of these institutions. Significant transformations occurred due to the influence of missionary schools, which had a profound impact on education. Missionary educators, including William Carey (1761-1834), played a crucial role in advancing textbooks and instructional techniques, effectively establishing the groundwork for modern education in India. Initially, the East India Company prohibited evangelical activities within its territories until 1813. However, the emergence of schools like Alexander Duff's institution in Calcutta, founded in 1830 and later known as the Scottish Church College, exemplified the appeal of contemporary schooling for the Indian population.

Following that period, in South Asia, the term "knowledge" implied European knowledge without qualification, while "education" without specification referred to "British" or more precisely "British colonial" education. Subsequently, indigenous institutions that conducted education in Indian languages gradually lost significance and appeal. Although these institutions persisted, their numbers dwindled over the next five to seven decades, rendering them unsuitable for the "elite" class. They found support primarily from the underprivileged, such as impoverished Muslims who opted for madrasas over English schools, or from conservative individuals, including Brahmins who favored Sanskrit schools. Similarly, traditional bankers and traders chose mahajani (indigenous business) education unapologetically. Moreover, since the early days, private schools emerged alongside public or government schools, indicating the endorsement of modern education by the Indian elite. This endorsement was driven by the belief in the profitability of colonial education, as proficiency in English became essential for securing the most prestigious positions in government service, private business, and trade. Over time, the measure of material success in life shifted to one's performance in school and university exams. Education transformed into economic capital and, using Pierre Bourdieu's terminology, also acquired the status of social capital (Kumar, 2021).

An examination of the system that has persisted to the present day follows, focusing on its structure, function, and significance. Kumar (2021) elaborates that, in 1857, the three universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras were established, following the model of the University of London. They provided affiliation and examination services to numerous colleges, without any geographical restrictions. The number of affiliated colleges increased from 27 in 1857 to 72 in 1882. The primary objective was to prepare students for the final examinations conducted by their respective universities. The universities were governed by a Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, and Fellows, with limited representation from college teachers. Colleges, in turn, relied on secondary schools for student enrolment. By 1882, India had 1,341 secondary schools operated by Indians and 757 run by foreign missionaries. At that time, only two schools provided teacher training, leaving the majority of teachers untrained.

### 3.4 Problems of the new education

Within the framework of colonial education in India, a spectrum of pivotal observations emerges. One of the initial contentions centered on the system being perceived as an external imposition, disrupting the historical involvement of local communities in nurturing schools and educators. The integration of schools into the state machinery resulted in a pragmatic cooperation, yet a sense of detachment persisted. Initial dialogues veered towards revitalizing indigenous education, but over time, the discourse shifted towards advocating for a consolidated national educational system

(Kumar, 2021). Among the distinct challenges scrutinized in the context of colonial education were several significant aspects. Primary education for the wider populace was marginalized, while a disproportionate emphasis was placed on higher education accessible primarily to the privileged strata. This discrepancy was further accentuated by a persistent dearth of dedicated institutions for teacher training, which remained an unresolved issue. Funding inadequacies impeded the establishment and maintenance of schools, leading to a proliferation of private schools catering to the more affluent sections of society.

Moreover, the colonial education system exhibited glaring gaps in addressing underrepresentation, notably in groups such as girls, Muslims, tribals, and lower castes. Universities, rather than being balanced, directed financial support disproportionately towards humanities rather than sciences. This imbalance bore implications for graduates in both realms during the colonial period, manifesting in challenges related to employment and burgeoning nationalist sentiments. The shortage of opportunities for technical, industrial, commercial, and agricultural education further exacerbated concerns of practical relevance, leading to an influx of degree holders ill-equipped for appropriate employment. Paradoxically, while colleges witnessed growth, the absence of robust oversight mechanisms for academic standards left these institutions susceptible to variances in quality and student caliber. This intricate web of circumstances engendered a distinct politicization within college education, enduring even beyond the colonial era. In tandem, examinations emerged as a focal point within the educational paradigm, eclipsing other pedagogical methods. This examination-centric disposition, rooted in colonial history, continues to shape the modern education system. Furthermore, primary education was entangled in a cycle of rote memorization and over-reliance on examinations, hindering the exploration of more dynamic and engaging teaching methodologies. This technical insufficiency persists due to the absence of comprehensive teacher training. These multifaceted facets of colonial education collectively underscore the intricate challenges and enduring consequences that continue to reverberate within the contemporary educational landscape of India (Kumar, 2021).

The colonial education system in India was intertwined with reforms during British rule. It is clear that the reforms had flaws such as lack of funding, lack of personnel, inability to reach every part of the country which results in only particular areas receiving proper schooling. One can understand that governing such a mass of population and land was not an easy task to do for the British Crown, without hindering or neglecting the development of disadvantaged groups of society.

### 3.5 Spread and progress of the new education

During the colonial period, individuals had diverse motivations for participating in the education system. Students and families opted for colonial schools to secure employment opportunities by acquiring English proficiency. Indian educators believed that this was the only viable option in a colonial state. Colonial educators viewed Western knowledge and English competency as utilitarian necessities and embraced an ideological belief that the new education system would bring about a social revolution as part of their civilizing mission. This resulted in the emergence of a new intelligentsia and the redefinition of professions to align with British standards. The new education spread gradually, allowing some social mobility but primarily contributing to elite reproduction. Interestingly, it was the castes and classes previously engaged in indigenous professions who pursued this education. However, the new education posed challenges for both students and their families due to its unfamiliar texts and epistemologies (Kumar, 2021).

The extent to which British education contributed to the emergence of nationalism in India has long been a subject of ongoing discussion and deliberation (McCully 1940; Guha 1987). Kumar (2021)

states, that, by delving deeper, we can expand the inquiry into the present and contemplate to what extent the modern education system could be held accountable for the present-day shortcomings of South Asian nation states in terms of economic development, fostering ideological cohesion among their citizens, and providing a holistic enrichment in life that education should ideally encompass. During the nationalist era preceding independence, approximately from 1885 to 1947, the colonial education system undeniably imparted the skills necessary for dissent and resistance, fostering a foundation of institutions and cognitive frameworks essential for a liberal democracy. Eminent figures of that era, such as Surendranath Banerjea (1848–1925), Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842–1901), and Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866–1915), exemplified the products of this new education. While outwardly influenced by Anglicization, they possessed a deep understanding of their society's requirements, enabling them to adapt the nationalist narratives of European history they had acquired to their own context. However, their progress was impeded by their reliance on the colonial state and the subtler forms of control internalized through their educational experiences. Their education instilled a teleological perspective of history that propagated the normative nature of British-led progress. It promoted the belief that gradual and liberal approaches were most effective in addressing societal challenges, reinforced the naturalness of hierarchies, and endorsed the necessity of discrimination and exclusion within the Indian context (Kumar, 2021).

### 3.6 Rise of nationalism

The mounting frustrations arising from the lack of job prospects and promotions commensurate with academic degrees, coupled with the realization that colonialism was built upon economic exploitation and racism, gave rise to a form of nationalism in the twentieth century that necessitated the unlearning of many lessons imparted by colonial schools. During this subsequent phase of nationalism, which began around 1905, Indian individuals who had received education within the same system as their predecessors were compelled to devise new educational content, including self-education. They began to place greater emphasis on Indian languages, ancient history, mythology, and even popular cultural practices. Some of them took the initiative to establish new educational institutions that embodied these new syntheses, while others served as role models, exemplifying the embodiment of these synthetic identities.

Among the educational institutions that emerged with fresh educational objectives were the Ramakrishna Mission schools established by the recently formed association led by Swami Vivekananda (Narendra Dutta) (1863–1902). Another noteworthy example was the Arya Samaj schools initiated by the association founded by Dayanand Saraswati (1824–1883) in 1877, aptly named the Anglo-Vedic schools. The Theosophical Society schools, including the Central Hindu Boys' School and the Central Hindu Girls' School in Banaras, established by Annie Besant (1847–1933), also played a significant role. These developments ultimately led to the establishment of Banaras Hindu University in 1916. Additionally, various gurukuls, vidyapiths, and national schools, colleges, and universities emerged during this period. These alternative institutions were distinct in their conscious departure from the inherently Christian nature of modernity. They diverged in concept from earlier Indian-founded schools like Ishwar Chandra Vidysagar's and the Deccan School Society's. The new agenda deliberately embraced a non-secular approach and, along with Muslim schools, emphasized the belief that an education devoid of religious principles was devoid of value and significance.

These schools aimed to provide an alternative to the colonial educational institutions. However, when considering the fundamental question of "What constitutes an Indian or Indic education?" it becomes evident that these schools did not truly offer an alternative. From the 1850s onwards, all schools employed similar educational technologies and discourses. Even if they did not always succeed in implementing them effectively, they still believed in and acknowledged their importance.

Whether religious or secular, government-run or privately owned, English medium or using Indian languages, schools with names like "gurukul," "pathshala," "convent," "Hindu," or "Muslim" shared more similarities with one another than with the pre-colonial indigenous schools or the post-1850s schools claimed to be nationalist and alternative.

In addition to tangible components such as infrastructure, classrooms, faculty members, admissions, promotions, and examinations, the new education system was defined as a "system" by its curricula. While some schools attempted to offer alternative curricula, there were still institutions that focused on Sanskrit, Arabic, indigenous accounting and bookkeeping, and the munda script. Madrasas also thrived within mosques and private residences. However, any school aiming for commercial success and popularity had to incorporate English into its curriculum, along with subjects like science, social studies, and mathematics. These subjects were combined to form a comprehensive "education" that was evaluated through separate examinations. The purpose of this education was not to serve the glory of a higher power, foster self-realization in students, promote holistic living, or pursue knowledge and truth. Rather, it represented a norm imposed by the state, mandatory in the global context, and even when certain groups were granted the right to establish their own institutions, the discourse and control still remained in the hands of the colonial and postcolonial states in South Asia (Kumar, 2021).

It is possible that India is currently failing and not a part of the Asian Miracle due to the break they took from colonial education. India decided to focus on religion and Indian culture and moved further from sciences and literature. This might have been a reason for the education reforms during colonial rule to not have been as successful as they were expected to be.

### 3.7 Current condition of education

The present state of education in India grapples with longstanding issues including inadequate resources and a shortage of competent educators. Additionally, there persists an insufficiently defined understanding of the concept of "Indianness." This lack of clarity stems from a simplistic response during the nationalist era that defined "Indian" as anything distinct from British or Western influences. Some individuals who sought a deeper understanding recognized modernity as a disguised threat but were unable to penetrate its facade and instead attributed it to Christianity. The lack of a clear resolution and vigorous debate regarding the essence of Indian education is a major failure of the system. Schools often promote a parochial, exclusionary form of nationalism, hindering the development of a cohesive Indian identity among students. Elite individuals identify more with a global rather than a national or local identity. Sectarian groups prioritize communal identities over national ones, while working-class children primarily associate with their social class. The empowering aspects of nationalism seen in other developed nations are absent in Indian education. Moreover, Indian secular schools often neglect storytelling, arts, and imaginative work, resulting in a spiritual and imaginative deficit among Indian children (Kumar, 2021).

Schools have proven to be inadequate in preparing students for the demands of the modern economy, which should have been a priority for both the nation and the pursuit of progress. This can to some extent be attributed to the impact of colonialism, as the colonial state established a weak and poorly designed educational infrastructure and implemented a deliberate policy of hindering India's development. English, intended to drive change and advancement, has arguably had the opposite effect. The majority of Indians neither acquire proficiency in English nor have the prospect of doing so in the future. The teaching of the language is substandard, resulting in a tremendous waste of human potential. Similarly, the instruction of Science, Mathematics, Arts, and Social Studies for the general population is conducted with significant deficiencies (Kumar, 2021).



(Kumar, 2021) strongly concludes that In India, the literacy rate stands at 60%, encompassing numerous school graduates who are unable to apply their acquired knowledge in practical contexts. This includes instances of learning being misdirected. Furthermore, the education system fosters a mechanical, unquestioning, and non-creative approach to learning that hampers individuals' innate capacity to thrive and acquire knowledge. Gender dynamics within education are patriarchal, with predominantly female and low-paid teachers, and a lower enrolment and higher dropout rate for girls compared to boys, resulting in fewer girls completing degrees or pursuing advanced studies. The educational system inadequately addresses the deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes of society, both in its structural setup and curricula. Moreover, it not only fails to instil a sense of nationalism or citizenship but also falls significantly short in promoting equality across social classes and religious sects. Instead, it perpetuates division, ignorance, and a sense of self-satisfaction, fostering indifference between the rich and the poor, Hindus and Muslims, and cultivating mutual suspicion among different groups.

Furthermore, the privileged class has disproportionately benefited from English education and higher learning, ensuring that limited educational resources are reserved for their advantage. Due to the inherent weaknesses of mass education, ordinary individuals continue to acquire knowledge rooted in local histories, traditions, and narratives. This leads to the development of a dynamic "culture" that is meaningful, lived-in, and not easily objectified. The elite also partake in this process, resulting in India embodying an "alternative" form of modernity. The country successfully maintains a coexistence of Western scientific knowledge and Indian sciences, Western worldviews and Indian philosophical systems, as well as Western lifestyle practices and Indian values. These elements harmoniously coexist in a creative and adaptable manner. One could argue that if modern education had been stronger in its structure, content, and cognitive impact, indigenous influences would have either been eradicated or profoundly redefined.

(Kumar, 2021) finally concludes that Since the nationalist movement, leaders in South Asia have strived to utilize an anti-colonial approach in shaping a successful "South Asian" education system. However, their endeavors have proven futile as they inadvertently perpetuated colonial practices. The postcolonial states have made little progress in allocating sufficient funds for their extensive human resources, reminiscent of the tight financial control imposed during colonial rule. Furthermore, they have clung to the curricula and pedagogical methods inherited from colonial schools, disregarding indigenous and vernacular conceptual frameworks and resources that are inherent to South Asia. Additionally, they have replicated the hierarchical structures of colonialism by segregating children based on their community background and social status. Education has the potential to contribute to the development of thriving democratic states, but the current leaders of these states lack the ethical principles and political determination required for such progress. It is as if they continue to serve the interests of a privileged class, similar to the colonial figures they were supposed to transcend. This ties to the heart of this thesis.

### 3.8 Colonial Education

Over the past three decades, a discernible change has occurred in the approach to the study of Indian education. This shift is characterized by a historiography that places emphasis on the meticulous examination of "factually accurate" and well-documented historical events, as described by (Rao, 2014, p. 3). This approach aims to unravel the complexities inherent in educational policies and experiences, recognizing the influence of the colonial context on crucial aspects such as funding, curriculum, and the determination of what knowledge is considered valuable. Additionally, this evolving historiography acknowledges the importance of considering other factors and power

structures that shape the educational landscape beyond colonialism's impact (Ellis, 2021). The inception of British education in the Indian subcontinent can be traced back to the latter part of the 18th century, spearheaded by benevolent organizations and missionary societies like the British and Foreign School Society. Initially, their primary focus revolved around providing education to underprivileged white boys and those of mixed racial heritage (Tschurenev, 2019). During the early 19th century, there was a notable proliferation of what can be described as an "imperial network of educational reform." This expansion aimed to provide schooling to the working classes, with particular emphasis on mission stations like Serampore and major port cities such as Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. However, despite these efforts, the educational system remained rooted in a "colonial grammar of difference," which accentuated and reinforced social hierarchies based on race, caste, and gender. This phenomenon can be attributed to the alteration made to the East India Company Charter in 1813, which permitted missionary endeavors and earlier efforts to organize British imperial governance under Governor-General Cornwallis. It involved various philanthropists, as well as missionary and colonial educational societies, including the Calcutta Book Society. From the 1820s onwards, these entities frequently collaborated with indigenous elites who had received an English education. Their aim was to integrate local educational practices, introduce European scientific knowledge, and promote social advancement (Tschurenev, 2019). What is more valuable to learn and in which language to be educated, has been a main point of discussion which is possible to have slowed down the proper development of the reforms during British rule in India.

### 3.9 Education language

Macaulay's 1835 Minute has become a symbol of the contentious debates surrounding the choice of language in education and the transition from Sanskrit and Arabic to English. This debate, often referred to as the Orientalist-Anglicist debate, represents the British colonial rule's dominance and disregard for indigenous knowledge and learning traditions. However, recent studies examining all 42 of Macaulay's Educational Minutes reveal a different perspective. It is argued that Macaulay intended to establish a more inclusive, egalitarian, and secular Anglo-vernacular education system with the support of reform-minded elites. This system aimed to challenge the traditional elites' hegemony, the dominance of Persian-Sanskrit literature, and caste privileges, while advocating for the right to education for the poor (Rao, 2019). According to Rao, the British, content with the misrepresentation of Macaulay as the antagonist, actually hindered the realization of his vision. Their support for these elite voices further exacerbated the brahmanization of educational spaces and reinforced the caste system itself. Although vernacular schools were gradually integrated into the colonial system, the advancement of educational reform was fragmented, slow, and varied greatly across different regions. A cohesive educational pattern did not materialize until Wood's Despatch of 1854. This Despatch aimed to extend British control by establishing new departments for Public Instruction. These departments would oversee the distribution of funds through the Grant-in-Aid scheme, as well as regulate the curriculum and assessment frameworks. It seems that the conventional model of imperial education, characterized by directives from London and strict imposition, was only truly relevant for a limited timeframe spanning from 1855 to 1882 (Allender, 2009). Rao writes that after the Hunter Commission in 1882, there was a pledge to provide vernacular education to the general population and foster a disciplined connection with the state. However, the outcomes were restricted and consistently hindered by insufficient funding and a broader British agenda to limit social mobility through primarily vocational education. Additionally, the British maintained their dedication to what they considered the established social structure, further impeding progress (Rao, 2013).

Viceroy Curzon implemented the recommendations of the Hunter Commission in 1904, but once again, the primary challenge remained funding. Starting from around 1900, the progress in education was predominantly propelled by Indian individuals. Initially, it was led by Gokhale and the liberal reformers of the Congress Party, and later by Indian-led governments following the Government of India Act in 1919 (Ellis, 2021). The notion of a linear trajectory in colonial educational policy and practice is flawed as it tends to overestimate cohesiveness and overlook the regional diversity of India. Furthermore, it places excessive emphasis on the experiences and perspectives of Bengal, thereby overprivileging them (Bayly, 2013). The evolution of education policy was influenced by various individuals and ideologies in both London and Calcutta (later Delhi), as well as in different Presidencies. It is crucial to avoid overestimating the extent of British power in the subcontinent, particularly before 1857, and their ability to enact substantial practical changes. Their rule was primarily marked by its localized nature and fragility, which limited the scope for significant social transformation and necessitated an approach of cautious experimentation” (Majeed, 1992, p. 196).

The implementation of the Grant-in-Aid system aimed to provide a stable financial foundation for education, but there was a significant disconnect between the aspirational rhetoric surrounding colonial education and the practical implications of limited funding. It is overly simplistic to attribute the situation solely to a deliberate strategy of colonial underinvestment while asserting moral superiority. A thorough examination reveals the influence of diverse provincial land taxes on state revenues, whereby regions like Madras and Bombay received higher land revenues, resulting in greater financial resources allocated to public services, in contrast to areas like Bengal (Chaudhary 2010).

According to Sengupta (2011, p. 15), the Grant-in-Aid system can be viewed as a policy of "practical non-interference." This policy allowed interest groups like Bhadrakol reformers and missionaries to establish their own educational systems and shape their desired society with minimal involvement or influence from the colonial state.

It can be concluded to some extent that the impact of colonial power on education policy could be overestimated, while Indian government part is not paid enough attention to.

## 4 Method section

This thesis uses Qualitative research which means gathering and examination of data in non-numerical nature with aim of comprehending concepts, opinions, or experiences. Its purpose is to delve into the intricacies of a problem, gain profound insights, or generate novel ideas for further research. The fundamental method of Qualitative approach chosen, is analytical narrative research. It is of better use when it comes to the research question and allows for adjustments and modifications as new insights, ideas, or patterns emerge, rather than being predetermined and inflexible from the outset. Another advantage is that open-ended responses provide researchers with the opportunity to discover unanticipated issues or potential opportunities that may not have been considered otherwise (Bhandari, 2020). Therefore, given the research question being “How come India has an unstable development process despite having gone through numerous educational system reforms during British colonial rule?”, this paper proceeds with analytical research of a combination of historical and contemporary documents. Mainly in the form of secondary sources, nevertheless, there are archives used, and primary sources dating from around a hundred and fifty years ago were examined. Official documents that suggest the application of education reforms from British government office in India are the primary sources employed. However, their respective summaries from articles assisted the research, since various parts of old text were difficult to read due to e.g.,

oxidized ink that causes it to fade and be difficult to read. Thus, it was made sure that they were backed up by secondary sources for the writer's better understanding.

The material to create an analytical framework that helps tackle the research question and effect of reforms, derives mainly from *The Haves and The Have-Nots: A Brief and Idiosyncratic History of Global Inequality* from Branko Milanovic in 2011, which presents 3 types of inequality and how inequality can be benevolent to societal development in education and economics. This part of theory is used to examine whether the reforms were intended to actually be equal among individuals or they were focused on wealthy part of society. The other work used for the analytical framework is *Development as Freedom* from Amartya Sen in 1999. His idea of education being a freedom of development is used to see if the reforms have made people freer, in terms of ability to educate themselves, work, and more importantly move between social classes.

## 5 Empirical Exploration: Unveiling Dynamics in Indian Educational Reforms

In the following section, we shift our focus to the empirical aspects of the research to gain deeper insights into the educational reforms that took place under British colonial rule in India. It became apparent in the Literature Review, that education in the South Asian region has been far from stable, with many viewpoints and opinions. This exact turbulence is the main attempt to explain in this thesis. And again, back to the research question... How come India has an unstable development process despite having gone through certain educational system reforms? The following section will dive deeper into showing the true character of the reforms that took place. In this study, there are 3 reforms that took place under company rule (British East India Company) and 4 that took place under the British Crown Rule.

### 5.1 Charter Act 1813

Before 1813, missionaries and religious groups provided unofficial basic education to the Indian population. However, the official introduction of a state system of education in Indian history occurred through the Charter Act. We will explore the significance of the Charter Act and Macaulay's Minute during the British period in India. While Christian missionaries primarily offered religious education related to Christianity in the 18th century, the East India Company restricted their propagation of religious education in India to protect its business policy and diplomatic role. This led to an agitation against the company, which resulted in the introduction of the education clause in the Charter Act of 1813, ultimately establishing a state system of education in India. The Charter Act included a clause stating that a specific amount of money, not less than one lac of rupees each year, would be allocated from the surplus funds for the improvement of literature, encouragement of learned natives, and promotion of scientific knowledge among the inhabitants of British territories in India. This marked the first official allocation of funds for Indian education. The clause compelled the East India Company to take responsibility for education, leading to the establishment of many schools and colleges under their control from 1813 to 1857, laying the groundwork for the English system of education in India.

The Act of 1813 marked a significant turning point in various aspects. It was the first recognition by the British administration in India of their educational responsibility, as they allocated a substantial amount of rupees for Indian education. This act acknowledged the official duty to address poverty and illiteracy, and legally mandated the company's involvement in educational development. Moreover, the Charter Act of 1813 paved the way for the introduction of Western literature and

culture in India, laying the foundation for subsequent educational and political developments in British India (Gulzar, 2021).

The historic Charter Act of 1813 marked a significant turning point in Indian education. It initiated the era of modern education and laid the foundation for subsequent developments in British India. The Act showcased the British Parliament's commitment to supporting Indian education financially and legally, emphasizing the East India Company's responsibility in this regard. It also highlighted the need for allocating a portion of the company's profits for the educational welfare of the Indian population. Additionally, the Act legally permitted the introduction and advancement of Western knowledge, literature, and science in the country (Gulzar, 2021).

The enactment of the Charter Act of 1813 not only permitted the presence of evangelicals within the territories of the East India Company but also included provisions for public education in India. It was Charles Grant (1768-1771, 1774-1790) who, two decades after his initial proposal, presented a vision for the upliftment of the Indian population. Grant advocated that the introduction of light, symbolizing knowledge, and enlightenment, was the true remedy for darkness. He believed that by fostering familiarity with the English language, Indians would gain access to Western knowledge, which in turn would gradually erode the foundation of misconceptions and falsehoods upon which Indian society was built (Embree, 1962, pp. 150-152). In the meantime, numerous segments of the Indian population were drawn to the allure of the new education and began attending and establishing schools that imparted English instruction. Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1834) and Ram Camul Sen exemplify the early 19th-century Bengali intellectuals who actively promoted English education. The establishment of the Hindu College in 1816 serves as a noteworthy example of a collective effort by members of the emerging middle class to provide their youth with Western knowledge. It is worth noting that most of these founders held socially conservative views. They regarded English and Western knowledge primarily from a pragmatic standpoint, recognizing its potential for material success, but failed to anticipate its transformative impact as a dominant culture that would overshadow indigenous narrative (Kumar, 2021).

By the 1830s, a fresh educational strategy for India was in the making, and it is this plan that has been passed down to present-day India. Thomas Babington Macaulay, the Law Minister, is widely regarded as the pivotal figure in this shift, as he cast the deciding vote in the council of Governor General William Bentinck. In 1835, Macaulay authored a notorious document, known as the Minute on Indian education, in which he strongly criticized Indian knowledge systems and intellectual frameworks, asserting their inferiority compared to European counterparts and questioning their educational value.

The Charter's Act of 1813 seems to have been following the developmental scope of Sen and Milanovic, namely, to have equal opportunity across the nation and provide education in order to remove the chains of illiteracy from people.

## 5.2 Macaulay's Minute 1835

Politician Thomas Macaulay wrote a minute on education in India. He firmly stated that British government must focus on promoting European teachings. According to his minute, the dilemma was to choose between teaching mainly in Arabic and Sanskrit or do so in English. T. B. Macaulay openly insisted that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.", making English language seem far superior. In the minute, English is presented as a gate to intellectual knowledge gathered through "ninety generations". Further, he compares

England to India, saying that, as they learned Greek to be able to study Greek philosophers, India shall now do the same. Another point he makes is that “languages of western Europe civilized Russia”, and that they will do the same for India. While he further tries to diminish the importance of studying Arabic and Sanskrit, he says that Indian students were being paid to study them. Moreover, he admits that it would be a difficult task for the Crown to teach all the millions of Indian people and accommodate to all their individual native languages and idioms thus, they are seeking to teach a group of Indians that would spread the knowledge instead (Macaulay, 1835). Does this hint the idea that the likelihood of equal spread of education throughout India will fail is significant? T. B. Macaulay ends his minute by stating how he would resign if local education keeps being favored.

The Minute might look harsh but appears to be a confident movement in the direction of Sens idea for education as part of successful development.

### 5.3 Wood’s Dispatch 1854

By 1853, several issues had emerged regarding education in India, necessitating urgent resolutions. In response to a government investigation, Sir Charles Wood, then the Secretary of State, forwarded a dispatch commonly referred to as Wood's Dispatch to the Court of Directors of the East India Company in 1854. In accordance with Wood's plan, the governmental imperative was the advancement of Western education facilitated by the employment of the English language as the medium for learning in higher education. Simultaneously, he advocated the establishment of vernacular primary schools tailored for rural areas. Among his additional proposals were the institution of a grants-in-aid framework to promote private sector engagement in the educational system, the establishment of Departments of Public Instruction in the five provinces, the establishment of universities in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, the creation of pedagogical institutes for teacher training, and the promotion of educational opportunities for women. Finally, the majority of Wood's recommendations were effective, therefore, there was a Westernization of the Indian educational framework. Notwithstanding certain constraints, the dispatch made substantial strides towards the structuring and consolidation of the contemporary educational system (Raj, N.A. & General Council of Education in India, 1854).

Rural areas being added meant that education would be widely spread across India and increase equality. Next follow the reforms of education during Crown Rule.

### 5.4 Hunter Education Commission (1882-83)

The Hunter’s commission has been set to examine the progress of Wood’s dispatch. Then, a number of instructions were given to the Commission regarding different aspects of education. The document states that the King of England then, believed that significant progress has been made in middle and high than in primary education. Thus, it is repeated that the goal of Government is that all branches of education move forward together. Still in the introductory part of the document it is explained that there are difficulties in providing free education. Wealthy classes are pushed to pay for their education and those who need help will be assisted (Government Of India, 1883). One can clearly observe again that there is a sense of lack of funds to support the education of the vast Indian population. Another point of the document explains how the commission invites wealthy local gentlemen to step in and take part in managing education. Does this imply that they were experiencing difficulties in managing the education?

The Hunter Education Commission shows an unequal progress of middle and high education in relation to primary, and people of higher class were made to pay for their education which could have been a move towards equality.

## 5.5 The Indian Universities Act, 1904

In 1904, under the stewardship of the British Viceroy, Lord Curzon, the Indian Institutions Act received approval, encompassing an extended regulatory purview over Indian institutions. Curzon's desire was to suppress the burgeoning tide of nationalism in India. Regrettably, the proposals outlined by the Hunter Commission to establish a robust educational framework remained largely unrealized, prompting Lord Curzon to implement changes across all aspects of government. The initial epochs of the twentieth century bore the imprint of political instability. The sanctioned discourse espoused the notion that educational establishments, while under private management, had undergone a deterioration, devolving into factories fostering the emergence of agents of political upheaval. The Indian Universities Act of 1904 ushered in substantial alterations in the governance and management of British India's educational institutions, encompassing pivotal attributes as described below:

A central system, Senate, is introduced to control universities. Affiliation system allows for colleges to connect with universities which allows them to conduct university-like classes and exams. A Statutory Recognition was given to universities to be able to standardize the credentials and academic distinctions conferred by universities, thereby guaranteeing their widespread recognition.

The Indian Universities Act of 1904 left a significant mark on higher education in British India. Key impacts included empowering the government to nominate most university fellows and granting the Governor-General authority over affiliations and territorial boundaries. The Act aimed to enhance oversight, control college expenses, and required universities to offer instructional programs. This led to the introduction of advanced courses and postgraduate teaching. Notably, it emphasized scientific and psychological research. Curzon justified stricter control for efficiency, but its practical aim was to limit intellectual independence and align education with the state's objectives.

Lastly, the Indian Universities Act of 1904 had a substantial influence on the configuration and administration of educational institutions in colonial India. Although it brought forth certain constructive changes, including the standardization of degrees and the institution of the affiliation system, it concurrently upheld a centralized regulatory framework, thus constricting the independent latitude of universities. This legislative act laid the groundwork for subsequent evolutionary trajectories within India's higher education domain and left an indelible imprint on deliberations pertaining to academic reforms during the post-independence period (Onlyias, 2023). The Universities Act of 1904 further boosted the development of higher education, which is not bad, however, attention should also be given to primary education.

## 5.6 Government Resolution on Education Policy 1913

In 1913, the government promulgated a resolution where it abstained from assuming the obligatory mantle of education yet embraced the overarching aspiration of eradicating illiteracy. Provincial authorities were suggested to provide cost-free fundamental instruction to the socioeconomically disadvantaged and less developed strata. The Government Resolution on Education Policy in 1913 encompassed vital aspects that shaped subsequent foundational principles in education. Concerning elementary education, the resolution advocated the augmentation of lower primary schools to encompass subjects such as drawing, map reading, nature study, and physical exercises. Moreover, it proposed the establishment of new upper primary schools in appropriate locations, promoting initiatives in regions where local bodies encountered difficulties in instituting educational facilities. The resolution stressed the significance of creating hygienic, cost-effective infrastructure for primary schools. It called for generous grants to indigenous educational establishments like makatabs and pathshalas. Furthermore, the resolution emphasized the necessity of rigorous inspections across

various primary school categories, along with the stipulation that primary educators should hold at least an intermediate qualification and complete a year of specialized training.

The 1913 Education Policy represented a reaffirmation of preceding policies, albeit using a more intricate terminology. The resolution set the groundwork for future changes in India's education system and helped it become more modern. However, it's important to note that education policies during British rule were mainly focused on serving the interests of the colonial administration rather than addressing the needs of the Indian people as a whole (Onlyias 2, 2023 & Governor General In Council, 1913). This reform was meant to be significantly beneficial in terms of eradicating inequality and promoting education for all, which is what Milanovic (2011) discusses.

### 5.7 Sadler University Commission (1917-19)

Established in 1917, the Sadler Commission, formally known as the Calcutta University Commission, was initiated under the chairmanship of Michael Sadler. Its objective was to evaluate Calcutta University's current status and future prospects while addressing effective policy formulation. After scrutinizing the challenges in Bengal's higher education, the commission proposed comprehensive measures spanning all educational levels. A key recommendation highlighted the vital role of bolstering secondary education to enhance higher learning.

The Sadler Commission undertook a comprehensive review encompassing the entire spectrum of education, spanning from primary schooling to advanced university studies. This stands in contrast to the Hunter Commission's examination of secondary education matters and the University Commission's 1902 report which predominantly concentrated on various dimensions of university education. According to the Commission's assessment, the connection of colleges and universities into a cohesive framework, despite the 1904 reform, remained unachieved, leaving the essential groundwork for a robust university system yet to be established. The Commission also identified persisting challenges in the structure and training of high schools. While the focal point of the Commission's investigation was Calcutta University, its insights and recommendations potentially extended beyond, offering potential benefits to other educational institutions across India.

The Sadler Commission's impact on Indian education was multifaceted. Notably, from 1916 to 1921, seven new universities were established, including Mysore, Patna, Benaras, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow, and Osmani, alongside Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras universities. This expansion led to increased academic activities through the introduction of Honours courses and heightened research facilities. Furthermore, the elevation of professorial positions, creation of education departments, and improved internal administration marked significant improvements. The commission also mandated full-time salaried vice-chancellors for effective leadership (Onlyias 3, 2023 & Sadler et al., 1920). The efforts towards empowering secondary education and then higher, are a definite move towards freedom in terms of educational freedom, however, how does this work with equal provision of opportunity since primary education might have been left neglected?

## 6 Conclusion

In summary, it would be pleasing to imagine that the research presented here has provided valuable insight into why the education reforms during British Colonial rule in India have not managed to facilitate cognitive, societal, and economic advancement of Indian people. As discussed above, it transpires that the policies did not always advocate for equal distribution of education. Sometimes there were insufficient funds, or the hand of the British Colonial rule was after all, not so far reaching, resulting in its inability to efficiently manage the educational institutions in all Indian regions. Presumably, the issue is that the British Empire assigned to itself an impossible task, which



would require a completely different approach. Their actions do not seem to have led to contemporary freedom of the Indian people, in terms of having the freedom to be educated, as Sen states, or to have reduced educational, and thus, economic inequality in India. The quite opposite is true, modern India suffers from vast inequality, while societal systems (such as the caste system), have been in place for thousands of years. I believe the topic has space for a plethora of further research and only after different aspects of India's educational institutions are examined, then would one be served with a clearer picture. Such research could be more focused on the role of Indian Government officials and their collaboration with the British Crown and the decisions they could make, and how these in turn affected Indian educational development.

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