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## GROWTH OF SCHOOL EDUCATION IN SHIMLA

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### Abstract

*In accordance with the social changes and development the necessity of women empowerment and gender issue has been becoming a burning issue day by day. For the full growth and protection of humanity and human society as a whole equal upliftment of the women is a necessary condition. In this paper I am taking the education and improvement in the condition of women in Shimla district.*

### INTRODUCTION

Himachal now known as the "Country's Orchard," nature's paradise and abode of peace, represented in the ancient times the Himalayas itself, with Nepal, Koomaanchal, Kedar, Ialandhara and Kashmir as its divisions. It is a hilly and mountainous region. The emergence of Himachal Pradesh is linked with the integration of the Indian state with the Indian union. Himachal Pradesh came into being on 15 April 1948 as a centrally administered territory by the integration of thirty erstwhile princely states.

Until the beginning of 1820 the area occupied by the modern-day Shimla was a dense forest. Only the *Jakhu* temple, which has stood the test of time, and few scattered houses comprised the signs of civilization. For a lack of contemporary history, opinion is divided even over the origin of its name. While some assert that the name is derived from a solitary house called '*Shamlaey*', others believe that the name is derivative from the name of a village called '*Shimla*' or '*Shumlah*'. A few others believe that a temple of goddess '*Shamli*' gave birth to the modern name but others assert that its original name was '*Shamalaya*'. Indeed very little is known about its early history. The earliest available records reveal that the area formed a part of the *kwothal* states of the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The association of the British with Shimla goes back to the *Anglo-Gurkha* war of 1814-15. In this war the *Gurkhas* were defeated and the British retained some places of strategic importance in these hills for security purposes. This included a part of the hill over which the Shimla town spread. Of all the towns of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla all along had a unique position and enjoyed from the day of the British Raj and international importance both as a hill station and the summer capital. It was because of its climate and salubrious surroundings that Shimla was chosen to be a sanitarium and summer resort by the British in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

At the beginning of last century, Shimla was described as an obscure village taken from the Rana of Nepal in 1815, and given to the Patiala Raja for assistance rendered to the British in the Nepal war.

Wilson in his '*abode of snow*' that the hill on which Shimla is situated was first made known by the visit to it by General Brothers, two Scotch officers who were engaged in the survey of the *Satluj* valley. Their diary, dated 30 August 1817, ran: "*Simla*, a middling sized village where a fakir situated to give water to travelers we encamped on the *Jakhu*, and had a very extensive, and beautiful prospect. But it was only in 1819 that the then Assistant Political Agent of hill

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states, Lieutenant Ross set up the first British residence. His successor, Charles Pratt Kennedy, erected the first "Pucca" house in the area three years later. The researches again have conflicting Kennedy. The town still has a building called 'Kennedy House' where certain Government are now located. The first Governor General who visited Shimla, was Lord Amherst Who, in 1827,<sup>10</sup> stayed with Major Kennedy, the political officer of the district, at "Kennedy House" and to quote the *Gazeteer*, this was the foundation of Shimla's greatness.

Once we have made a brief survey the development of the Shimla town. Let us examine the nature and character of the Shimla society. According to Captain G. P. Thomas who visited in 1839, Shimla society was indifferent stupid for the first weeks, for despite the maxim that everybody knows everybody, nobody knows anybody for about that time<sup>11</sup> and society was accordingly stiff and hollow.

They belonged to diverse regions and were put together due to compulsion of their job. Yet comparatively better off or in particular the European tried to form groups among themselves and the British were known to encourage the tendency. It was also reflected in number of schools and hotels that cropped up in the town mainly with a view to cater to preceptor groups. The very name of the school (which were paid grant-in-aid by the local municipal committee) give an idea of the presence of diverse groups. There was Sir Harcourt Butler High School, The Sanatan Dharam Sabha school, The Islamic High School, The Madriari Boys Primary School, The Arya Samaj Girls Middle School, The Khalsa Girls School beside the elitist Christian schools like Bishop Cotton, Auckland House, St. Edwards and Loretto convent Tara Hall.

The low paid employees, who were generally classified as 'clerks' were mainly Bengalis did not have roots in the town and therefore, had little interest in the development. In the initial stages the 'Clerks' were mainly Bengalis coming from the warm climate of Calcutta and they found it difficult to acclimatize in the cooler heights of Shimla. Their cause and wrote that the "ill paid and the ill fed clerks are quite unable to stand the trying cold of Shimla.

It was the class of the shopkeepers and the businessmen who developed greater though they too had to come to the status in the town amongst the Indian's to cater to the needs of British settlers; and in the early days they used to come during the season only and played a major role in the development of town.

The traders most important among them the Sood traders who mainly come from Kangra, were a close-knit society. "In the initial states, the two groups of Sood traders called the 'Newandia' and the 'Uchandia', who had come from the plains and the upper areas come from the plains and the upper areas respectively; did not mix up and even inter marriage between the families belonging to the two groups was not permitted. In the course of time, however, they began mixing up and the bar on marriages was also lifted. The Sood traders held a great sway and there was a saying that the "Soods" the Sirkar and Shimla" synonymous. They also began temples and schools and one of them, Rai Shib Nidha Mal Puran Mal became a legend in his life time. He also got constructed a big Seraifor Indian.

It was for this conglomerate population, Shimla was expected to arrange education. Naturally, education Institution that development were alone of diverse standing and stature.

Here it is only pertinent to from some estimate of the population of the town. According to Shimla District *Gazetteer* 1888-89, Shimla with a density of total population on total area of

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395.6 persons to the square mile stands ninth among the District of the Punjab but the average population per square miles of total area is in the case of this district 1.430 persons on a square mile as out of 102 square only 15 sq. miles are under cultivation.

### GROWTH OF SCHOOL EDUCATION IN SHIMLA

If we need a nation of healthy and fully developed men and women, we need disease free and property nurtured children. In case of children, rearing up becomes all the ' more important, because apart from the body we have to deal with mind and soul also, we have to look after the child constantly and carefully, cautiously and conscientiously with love and longing if we want children to grow into healthy, intellectually alert and spiritually awakened citizens.

Education is a unique and great investment in human capital for the present and the future. Education is an important factor for progress and all-round development of a country. It plays a vital role in economic and social development and national integration of a country.

Students in ancient India used to receive education far away from parental influence under guidance of celebrated teacher called "Guru" like *Vishvamitra*, *Vashist* and *Dronacharya*.

After the establishment of British rule in India, modern system of education was introduced in 1835. This resulted in the opening of a number of schools and institutions of higher learning. Many schools were established in the different parts of the country by the East-India Company known as company schools. There also emerged a number of public schools, more or less designed as the pattern, started primarily to cater to the needs of European population.

B.B. Mishra says that "Educationally, However the whole trend of the company's Government under *Bentinck* and after acquired an urban orientation. Here it is merely necessary to observe that this urban orientation flowed mainly from the immediate need to create for reasons of economy a loyal and subordinate class of government employees who might assist the company's European civil servants in their revenue and judicial work according to the rules and regulations enacted in English. They were to be recruited from the affluent section of the upper and middle classes of urban society. Besides this, Macaulay's purpose was "to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste in opinions, in morals and in intellect."

However, for the present project, what is crucial to know is whether or not there was any educational institution in and around the village of Shimla, what so ever picture can be formed from the growth of Shimla town, it itself reveals that there were no educational institutions in or around Shimla. At best in some villages or in politically or commercially important centers in the hills, the priest or the head of the family used to teach reading and writing in *Tankri* or *Hindi* to the children in the temple or at home. The main emphasis, however, was either on 3R's or moral religious and spiritual education.

The concept of popular and progressive education as it is understood to-day did not exist. Moreover, in the hill states before their merger into Himachal Pradesh, the education set up was highly uneven. Some states were much ahead while the others were quite backward with little educational facilities. The grave disparities between different princely states were further aggravated by the fact that educational facilities were unevenly distributed between

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the Urban and rural area to the disadvantage of the latter. Not much heed was paid to the education of women. Even if there were some formal schools the teachers were mostly untrained and underpaid and different pay scales existed in different states. As regards Shimla, it may be stated that it received special attention almost since the emergence of a sanitarium and later came as the summer seat of provincial and central governments. Therefore, it attracted the attention of Christian missionaries as well.

As the population of Shimla grew so did its needs. This resulted not only in the coming up of many commercial establishments but also a number of banking and educational institutions. Many Europeans felt that Shimla and its surrounding area were very congenial for the education of their children. This gave further impetus to the growth of educational institutions in the area. In fact, the existing facilities of education, Shimla, primarily owes to the period of the British Raj.

In the course of time broadly two types of schools came up namely the Anglo-Indian schools and the Indian schools, which were basically meant for the wards of the Europeans. In fact, Shimla had the privilege of catering to the educational need of the families of the Europeans as well as natives in a big way as it remained the summer capital of the Raj.

The first ever known educational institution was the Shimla Municipal Board School founded in 1848, to provide teaching upto the matriculation standard. After sometime two primary schools, one in *Boileauganj* and another on the cart-road, were started. There was a boarding house in the main school building which had a capacity to accommodate 35 students. After this many convent and public schools, one after the other, came into being in and around Shimla. Also at *Sanawar* a year earlier one school known as Lawrence Military school was started by Sir *Henry Lawrence* in 1847 for the benefit of the children of British soldiers. He also believed that Indians should hold position of high responsibility in the British Raj.

Towards the end of the 1850's, there came up another important institution for boys' education known as Bishop Cotton on 28 July, 1859. For another six and a half decades, no institution for the education of boys came up in the town Shimla. It was only in 1925, the society of Irish Christians Brothers opened a school for boys known as St. Edward's school.

For the education of girls the first steps were taken by the nuns of the congregation of Jesus and Mary. The nuns of this congregation had come to India as far back as 1842. However, in Shimla they established their first institution known as Chelsea in 1864. After two years another school known as Punjab girls' school was started in 1866. Later on after a period of 2 years when the number of students increased, the governors bought the old house of Lord Auckland. In the year 1869 some additions and alterations were made and the school took the name of Auckland House. At the end of the 19th century, for the Loreto day School situated on the Hall in a building which formerly belonged to the United Service Club and was acquired by the Loreto Sisters in 1945.

It becomes evident that until 1847, there was no modern educational institution in or around Shimla. At best in some villages or in politically or commercially important centres in the hills. The priest or the head of the family used to teach reading writing in *Tankrior* Hindi to children in the temple or at home. The main emphasis was either on the 3 Rs. or moral religious and spiritual education. The concept of popular and progressive education as it is understood today did not exist.

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No doubt, Shimla. received special attention almost right from its mergence as a *Sanitorium* in the early 1820' but modern educational institutions came to be established in Shimla only in 1848'. The growth of the modern educational institutions is very much linked with the increase of the popularity of Shimla as a hill resort, the rise of its population and its growing needs as a seat of imperial authority. Because of its healthy climate many Europeans felt that Shimla and its surrounding areas were very congenial for the education of their children. The emergence of a stable population gave it a further impetus. Therefore, in the course of time, broadly two types of school came up in Shimla, i.e. Anglo-Indian schools and schools run by indigenous organisations of different, denominations.

In other words, Shimla town soon had the privilege of catering to the educational needs of the families of the Europeans as well as of native origin.

In the twentieth century two more educational institutions were started by Christian Missionaries these were St. Bede's College and St. Edward School. Besides these Christian institutions, a number of indigenous educational institutions also emerged in the early twentieth century. From the records available in the State Archives. It is revealed that Arya. Girls School had come up in the first decade of the twentieth century and it had applied for grant-in-aid in 1909. Similarly, there emerged *Gurkha* Girls School at *Kaithu*; two Govt. Primary Schools at *Phagli*; One for boys and the other for girls; Sanatan Dharam Sabha Girls School; Guru Nanak Girls School; and Shimla .Municipality school to cater to the needs of the people from different localities.

In addition, to these schools, some night Schools, and schools to impart education to villagers were also started in the town in the first half of the 20th century. Most of these schools were aided by the government and received regular grant-in-aid.

These schools had a significant number of students on their rolls. The reports of the education department revealed that these schools functioned satisfactorily and made good progress. The work of some of the schools was arranged in accordance with the Punjab Education Board, whereas others were affiliated to the Calcutta University. Most of the public schools prepared their students for Indian certificate of Secondary Examination popularly known as I.C.S.E. Some of the schools like Bishop Cotton Schools prepared the students for the entrance examination of various government services. In the convent public schools some teachers were from England or European countries, whereas in Government or Municipality run schools, the staff was Indian. Most of the Christian educational institution had boarding and lodging facilities in the pre-independence period. In these schools special emphasis was laid on all-round development, of children. Every effort was made to prepare them to face the competitive world. Many students of the public and indigenous institutions excelled in different fields. No wonder Shimla gradually came- to enjoy a world- wide reputation for the education of children.

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