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BOOK REVIEW: *ENGLISH EDUCATION IN INDIA, 1715-1835*

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Kochhar, R. (2021). *English Education in India, 1715-1835*. London: Routledge India.

*English Education in India, 1715-1835 Half-Caste, Missionary, and Secular Stages* by Rajesh Kochhar is a modest attempt to understand the establishment of education and schools in the early colonial period and how various social constructs influenced the educational establishments in India. Kochhar's previous scholarship has focused on technological education and its history in colonial India. However, in this book, he focuses on language as a central focus in three distinct stages of development and growth under the British Empire: (i) Half-caste Stage, (ii) Missionary Stage, and (iii) Secular Stage.

The book is divided into seven chapters: chapters two and three discuss the so-called "half-caste stage" and missionary stage respectively, while the rest of the chapters focus on what Kochhar terms the "Secular Stage". Kochhar's classifications indicate transformational periods which represent the shift in the attitude towards education by the Empire and the motive behind the changes. Chapter seven discusses the work of scholars such as Duff, Trevelyan, Macaulay, and Bentinck. Thus, the categorization by Kochhar is not only chronological but is also based on attitude shifts and the intentions behind the shifts in the policy.

Kochhar's choice of the term "half-caste" for the first stage is a problematic use of this historically pejorative term for people of mixed-race. The categorization of this stage is intended to refer to the first-generation offspring of European fathers and native or mixed-race mothers, a group who would later come to be known as "Eurasians" or

“Anglo-Indians”. Previous scholars have generally referred to the group as “mixed-race” or “mixed-descent”, wherever the terms “Eurasians” or “Anglo-Indians” were deemed anachronistic. It would be difficult to find any unironic academic use of the derogatory term “Half-caste”. Kochhar claims that his study is the first to detail this so-called “half-caste education stage”. However, this educational period has been previously discussed by Reverend J.A. Graham in his article titled “*The Education of the Anglo-Indian Child*” in the 1934 issue of the Journal of Royal Society of Arts, under the term “Anglo-Indian” or “Eurasian”. A wider discussion of the term “Eurasian” also appears in Syed Mahmood’s *A History of English Education in India (1791-1893)* published in 1895.

Kochhar’s understanding of theology and conflict between Protestants and Roman Catholics leading to establishments with religious identities propels a broader understanding of education being driven by the force of religious identity. However, Kochhar’s understanding of the Anglo-Indian group is limited concerning social class and race. He does not account for the British class structure. His focus on the mixed-race group is restricted to the children of soldiers of the lower class. Higher British officials and their mixed-race children have not been discussed, although the differential treatment of the higher and lower military officials’ mixed-race children may be understood through the British orphanages and their related schools.

Kochhar discusses the scholarship of Durba Ghosh when discussing the entity of Lower and Upper Orphanages, however, his view of the Anglo-Indian community is quite unidirectional. Durba Ghosh in the article “Making and Un-making Loyal Subjects: Pensioning Widows and Educating Orphans in Early Colonial India” (2003) discusses the concept of citizenship with the social perspective of the colonizers and the colonized, whereas Kochhar only looks at the perspective of the colonizers. Kochhar mentions various examples of mixed-race individuals and the shift in the attitude towards the mixed-race groups. When institutions were opened for the education and care of mixed-race children, the latter were euphemistically called poor Protestant children or illegitimate children of Protestant fathers. In the view of Kochhar, the orphans in the eyes of the imperial powers were never meant to join the top administrative positions. These institutions were charity schools and asylums.

The next stage i.e., “Missionary Stage” (1800) was categorized as a period where the missionaries established their presence in colonial India. The East India Company permitted British Christian Missionaries the freedom of operation in all the territories under the Company under the Charter of 1813. The primary reason, he argues, the government permitted missionaries and their work in education was an intention to drive linguistic development that in turn would lead to benefits in the affairs of the trade in the East. The missionaries undertook a reverse approach to propagate religion by learning vernacular languages, grammar, and the creation of bilingual dictionaries. Not only did the missionaries learn the vernacular languages, but the study of the Hindu religious texts from Sanskrit was also undertaken to understand the religious life of natives. According to Kochhar, the missionaries' only aim was to convince the pupils that Christianity was the only true religion.

The religious conversions by missionaries created a feeling of unrest and worry that led to the formation of the Hindoo College at Calcutta in 1817. Kochhar regards this period as the “Secular Stage”, though these secular establishments were formed on religious identities. The interest of the Hindus of Calcutta to learn and educate themselves in the English language was proposed by David Hare and Sir Raja Radhakanta Deb with Raja Ram Mohan Roy heading the initiative. The Hindoo College, established by the wealthy Hindus of Calcutta, was a pioneer in the development of the native education under government control. The promotion of this institution was driven by the unrest created over the idea that English missionaries were using English education as a tool for introducing Christianity to natives. Hindoo College, now known as Presidency University, served as a model for non-Christian schools to establish themselves. A prerequisite for the expansion of the school system was the easy availability of textbooks, in the writing of which the missionaries and chaplains played a leading part. British administration in general and many individual Englishmen were very supportive of English education for Indians.

The British had earlier projected themselves as patrons of ancient learning and retained Persian as the official language. It was important to evaluate certain policies in terms of language. In 1835, policies implemented by Governor-General William Bentinck following T. B. Macaulay's *Minute* on educational policies revolutionized English education in India. The shift in the educational policies redirected

governmental support for the oriental institutes, instead towards English education. Additionally, the oriental educational systems of native Hindus and Muslims were preached against by the British with racism and casteist attitudes. The official administration language was changed from Persian to English. Subsequently, the focus was not limited to imparting knowledge to natives but was to create natives with British attitudes of taste, intellect, opinions, and morals.

Kochhar has described the stages of educational development and growth in colonial India from 1715-1835 in-depth with a focus on changing concepts and attitudes. Kochhar's understanding is tainted with a unidirectional perspective that has not accounted for the education of individuals of higher social class and status but is limited to the lower socio-economic groups. Moreover, the chapter on mixed-race groups in early colonial India fails to discuss the British construction of class and race. This understanding of the mixed groups does not account for the Dutch, French and Portuguese attitudes and how they even impacted the English East India Company and their politics. This scholarship is a modern understanding of the concept of educational history in India; however, it bears an anachronistic if not prejudicial mark even when compared with the findings of Justice Syed Mahmood's book titled *A History of English Education in India (1791-1893)*. Mahmood's work refers to the mixed-race group as "Eurasian" unlike Kochhar's use of "Half-Caste", which is an outdated and derogatory term of which Kochhar seems to be aware. One may speculate that the term "half-caste" has been used in order to increase the Search Engine Organization (SEO), since the usage of word "race" or "mixed-race" are less discussed compared to "caste" in an Indian academic publishing space.

*English Education in India, 1715-1835 Half-Caste, Missionary, and Secular Stages* by Rajesh Kochhar is a basic introduction to the educational history in colonial India from 1715-1835. However, its value is diminished by historical gaps as well as political ideologies and perspectives which are not sensitive to the terminology and understanding of the social groups it describes in-depth, especially the mixed-race Anglo-Indian groups.

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