

Colonial Modernity and Native Identity: A Case Study through Sikh Journals (1900-20)

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Abstract

This paper will explore the consolidation of colonial modernisation in the Punjab of the late nineteenth century. This will basically be in regard to projects of a similar nature carried in the entire Indian sub-continent. It will then look at fascinating responses in indigenous identity formation as an outcome of the Singh Sabha Movement of 1873, one of the most significant modernising influences on the colonised Punjab. By looking at the examples of various Sikh journals and their coverage of Sikh education and identity related issues during the years between 1900 to 1920, this paper will conclude to observe as to how there was a simultaneous process of influence and subversion on the part of members of native communities to modernising measures introduced by the colonial administration. From a post-colonial viewpoint and that of social enquiry, this is fascinating, as it is not a routine exercise to consult such lesser known sources, while exploring the colonial-native encounter in one of the most significant periods of Indian history.

Keywords: Colonial Modernity, Native Identity, Sikh community, Subversion, Sikh Newspapers

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1920, this paper will conclude to observe as to how there was a simultaneous process of influence and subversion on the part of members of native communities to modernising measures introduced by the colonial administration. From a post-colonial viewpoint and that of social enquiry, this is fascinating, as it is not a routine exercise to consult such lesser known sources, while exploring the colonial-native encounter in one of the most significant periods of Indian history.

One needs to first look into the details of the aspects of 'colonial modernity'-a project that almost became an organised influence in mid nineteenth century British India. The project of modernisation in India initially begun as being administrative in nature, where the latter part of the eighteenth century, was used by astute administrators such as Cornwallis and Warren Hastings to first streamline the legal, judicial and politico-administrative branches of the government. Thus, the conquest of Bengal became a means of establishing a streamlined and uniform governance based structure all across the country and, through a series of regulations issued in the early part of the nineteenth century, a mechanism came to develop with the British Parliament beginning to exercise an increasingly significant amount of control over the affairs of East India Company. This was to be followed by a complete takeover of East India Company, with India coming under the British rule, after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857.

Here, a reference from Yogendra Singh's *Modernisation of Indian Tradition* (1986)¹ would be useful. Singh observes that the Western tradition came to be based on a form of legal rationalism, which recognised a utilitarian and contractual relationship, between individual and society. There was also foregrounded a new form of achievement criteria which came to be based on a system of social stratification. All of this also coupled with diffusion of Western technology and innovations resulting from the same. Gradually, the dissemination of these Western ideas led to a gradual emergence and consolidation of reformist movements in different parts of the country.

Singh notices how the legal arena became one of the initial fields for change and transformation. The British did away with the prevalent notions of customary law, and introduced new legal principles based on rationalism and individualism. This was further consolidated through the establishment of a decentralised system of law courts in different parts of the country. There then came up developments such as formalisation of the Indian Penal Code in the

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early nineteenth century. There also came about, a gradual schematisation of the hierarchy of court system in India with the clear demarcation of the Supreme and the High Courts.

In a similar manner, the foundation of modern education in India was also laid by the British majorly in the nineteenth century. This included policies, from 1835 onwards to promote European learning in English, recognition of the need for 'mass education', and consequent demarcation of the 'filtration theory' with also the recognition of private Indian agencies in the expansion of education. Gradually then; there came about a clear establishment of different levels within Indian education such as the primary level, the high school level and collegiate level. The main idea was to create, a local pool of native intelligentsia, who could be an enabling factor for the British in their administrative work. There also came about a development of professional ethic in the recruitment of teachers. There was a deliberate refashioning of the older existing native traditions within Indian education. These had earlier led to a dominance of religious texts and centrality of caste/class based consciousness.

In addition to the aforementioned innovations in the field of education and law which gradually foregrounded the significance of learning in English for the administrative convenience of the British, there also emerged a reaction against the existing social and cultural orthodoxies in Indian society. When the British administrators began to both speak and legislate against the prevalent forms of social injustices in Indian society such as the dowry system, reality of female infanticide, ban on widow remarriage or the cause of literacy; there also emerged a simultaneous spirit of awakening in the newly emergent generation of Indian intelligentsia. This intelligentsia gradually became sensitive to the ills central to their social customs.

Thus intellectuals and reformers like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Raja Ram Mohun Roy or Syed Ahmed Khan came to the fore. With their emergence, there came about an interesting aspect of unique innovations within indigenous identity formation in response to the project of colonial modernisation. There came about a greater sympathy and understanding of importance of English education and learning; the uniqueness of rationality inherent within Western civilisation; and, why it becomes necessary to fight with social and economic ills of one's own community. In addition to this as has already been mentioned; there was a streamlining and consolidation of the railway, postal and telegraph system in the country with also the establishment of canal projects. These were

undertaken by the British for better irrigation results in the agricultural areas of the country.

Within the field of infrastructure too, through the British administration; there happened an almost entire revamping of the country with the establishment of railways and telegraph, streamlining of newer modes of communication such as the postal system and also the creation of local bureaucratic elite who could aid in this process of decentralised administration. They also brought with them various European ideas of enlightenment and reform, while also bringing in technology and apparatus of the nature of print technology for the diffusion of these ideas. Interestingly, the project of colonial modernisation was introduced in gradual phases in India. This began with an infrastructural and administrative revamping of the province of Bengal through a reorganisation of judicial, agricultural and governmental spheres. Also, through the passing of a series of Regulating and Charter Acts; not only was the Indian trade gradually fully opened to needs and interests of the European markets, but there also came about a gradual and increasing amount of trade regulation in the country.

All in all then, with the advent of British in India; there came about an establishment of new cities, modernisation of transport and communication, and introduction of a new system of modern education. Significantly, most of these changes happened in India's social, economic and cultural system at a time, when the earlier history of the country, under distinct rulers was characterised by a feudalised mode of administration; a hierarchy system characterising both mobility through social goodwill and unequal distribution of resources; and, literacy being confined to a small group of people.

Throughout the pre-British period, there was a territorial and feudal idea which determined the interests of the royal class, and consequently this became a detriment in letting a sense of national unity emerge amongst the country's people. Ironically then, when measures of colonial modernisation were introduced by the British administration; the newly introduced ideas of democracy, enlightenment, and social reform only created a sense of national unity in the country's people.

In the case of mid nineteenth century Punjab and the times prior to that, the situation was somewhat similar to other parts of the country. Punjab was under the Sultans and Mughals for a considerable amount of period, before the authority of Misl chiefs became predominant, leading to final consolidation of power by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The social and economic structures and

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prevalent ideas were largely conservative in nature. A feudal system of nobility controlled a major part of affairs of the state both under the Sultans and the Mughals. Even the Misl chiefs largely came to power on the basis of feudal form of territorial sovereignty. Education was excessively restrictive in nature being confined to a few traditional social classes and there was an immense scope of social reform. There was no infrastructural modernisation in Punjab, with income from land revenue, continuing to be the dominant form of economic sustenance for the state. The British were to utilise the system inherited from the Mughals and Ranjit Singh in this regard.

When British then annexed Punjab in 1849 after a ten year long struggle with the Sikhs since Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, they gradually modernised the entire province. In this regard, Surya Kant provides a detailed analysis of the administrative space in British Punjab in his essay, "Administrative Space in British Punjab" (2005)². He notices that Punjab for the British was one of their largest and most profit giving province. Initially, they styled a part of its districts as subdivisions and the rest as *tahsils*. Pretty much in tandem with the principles of their rule and modernisation in other major Indian provinces- as also noted in the earlier part of this section (such as the United Provinces, Bengal, Bombay and Madras)- bureaucracy, rationality, legality and centrality ruled the order in Punjab. This also led to a consequent weakening of the feudal lords, and a subsequent powerful emergence of merit based appointees. The final consequence was the emergence of a "five tier hierarchy of administrative areas at the local level of administration, in place of three tier hierarchy in the Mughal period..." (pp. 218-19).

A close administrative focus on the Punjab also meant a huge investment in its public works and infrastructure. There was also a major reorganisation of the province, after the Revolt of 1857, adding major portions of areas such as Delhi to it. While with the British, there was a centralisation in administration; there was also a simultaneous increase in the intensity of the process of revenue collection through its more rigorous reorganisation at the local level. There was also a comparatively greater spatial dissemination of police and legal machinery. Hugh Trevaskis points in his seminal *The Land of Five Rivers* (1928), pretty much in alignment with what the British had done to other parts of India with regard to modernisation (as noted above), they established somewhat similar mechanisms within Punjab also³. The administration both at the village and the town level was gradually bureaucratised so that there came about a change in both the social and economic functioning of the villages.

In addition, there was building of railways and roadways, development of canal irrigation, redesigning of the system of education, a new development within agricultural money lending, increase of money in circulation, introduction of true money economy, establishment of Cooperative Credit Societies, legislation to protect the cultivation from the money lending castes, growth of towns and building of factories and importation of manufactured articles (Marenco, p. 169). There was a gradual development of both infrastructure and communication in Punjab by the British to suit their own ends. These basically only opened Punjab to products of outside industry without leading to the development of internal indigenous industries. The consequent outlets could be found nowhere but in the economically unproductive fields of litigation and money-lending.

Reeta Grewal also observes in the essay, "Urban Revolution under Colonial Rule" (2004), that parallel to this infrastructural upgradation of Punjab being done by the British; there was also an "urban revolution under the colonial rule", wherein not only new towns and cities developed, but they also became a means of infrastructural modernisation and communication revolution. This is where a lot of these towns became the centre of social and religious reform due to the presence of printing presses and educational centres in most of these urban areas. There also came about a gradual system of democratisation of political administration and introduction of measures such as election of municipalities in different urban centres.

In this regard, it should be noticed, that in the case of Punjab after the mid nineteenth century, responses in native identity to colonial modernity were similar to these developments in other parts of the Indian sub-continent. Ian Talbot (1988) interestingly mentions in his work *Punjab and the Raj*, that a group of local elites was created to gather support for the British project of colonial modernisation. Usually, a lot of policies in industry and agriculture were made beneficial by the British from the viewpoint of benefitting these classes of local Indian elites. For instance, immediately on their arrival in Punjab, the British realised that they had to "base their political control on the support of the leading landowning groups. . ." (pp. 10-11). The British also created an educational policy to secure loyal landowners as its most powerful allies. An instance of the same was, the establishment of Aitchison College in Lahore in 1886, to provide education for the son of leading landlords. The ethos and syllabus was similar to that of the English public schools, and usually ended with significant political careers in administration for most of these students.

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While a system of patronage was put in place to win local allies in all spheres (in the form of cash, honorary titles or land grants), they also diplomatically supported the educational and cultural activities of a considerable portion of the Sikh aristocracy through the Singh Sabha Movement of 1873.

As a matter of fact, one of the most significant contributions to have been made by the British colonial rule in the mid nineteenth century was the creation of a new Indian middle and intellectual class. This, as Indu Banga observes in her essay “The Sikhs under Colonial Rule” (1999) - can be understood in terms of developments such as proliferation of government departments, spread of western education, and possibilities of social mobility⁴. Also then, developments such as the Indianisation of the civil services and opening of lucrative administrative posts for the Punjabis had an impact on aspects of social mobility within Punjab itself.

Gradually, the growing prosperity of these “middle classes” came to reflect in the growth of the number of urban centres in Punjab. The impetus to both literacy and reform within the Sikh community only intensified this social mobility across caste and class barriers, and was provided a further encouragement by the Singh Sabha Movement of 1873. Liberal thought also came to be represented through developments such as the first session of Indian Association at Lahore in 1893. Another rather very fascinating instance of colonial modernisation in Punjab was the establishment of the Punjab National Bank in 1895, which was also the first purely Indian bank, to be established in India. Also, Peshawar, Delhi and Amritsar, were to be the thriving centres of business in Punjab when the century opened.

As a matter of fact, the spate of economic and administrative reforms began in Punjab with the establishment of the Board of Administration after the 1840s. Due to the British becoming extremely successful in tapping the agricultural wealth of Punjab, it was transformed from being one of the poor provinces to being one of the richer centres in India by the onset of the twentieth century. H.S. Oberoi also makes some significant observations in his work, *Construction of Religious Boundaries* (1994), pertaining to colonial modernisation carried by the British in Punjab at the onset of nineteenth century. He observes that for the purposes of convenient administration, British divided Punjab into ten divisions and thirty two districts. Through the introduction of railways, telegraph, postage facilities, printing press, new market towns and establishment of canal colonies; the significance of old divisions was eroded and

gradually, a new pattern of modernisation and administration set in⁵. Punjab also became the leading recruitment centre for the Indian army.

Within the legal and judicial arena also, some significant changes happened⁶. While under Ranjit Singh, the whole province was divided into several small divisions under petty chiefs, most of the population was illiterate and crime rates were prevalent, it was with the arrival of British and by the year 1853, that elaborate and well organised machinery was established for the administration of justice in the province. Gradually, on the civil and criminal side, a successful hierarchy of courts was established. Within the sphere of education, when the British arrived in Punjab, what they discovered was an already existing system of indigenous schools. These were usually owned by the members of the Hindu and the Sikh community; and, the teachers usually tutored their students in areas such as religion, literature and identity. The British project of colonial modernisation of the nineteenth century also aimed at transforming the sphere of education, so as to both invest the ideals of liberal education by creating a pool of local elites and to aid the cultural modernisation of the Indian people.

In the specific context of Punjab, this educational modernisation took the form of opening of a number of Christian styled Anglo-vernacular schools, and propagation of ideals of Christianity and Western religion to the Punjabis. In this regard, they were provided an able hand by the missionaries as well. The missionaries had already established their educational centres in different parts of Punjab much before the coming of the British. They had done so for the propagation of Christian learning, language, and education. Gradually, there came about an establishment of government sponsored schools in different parts of Punjab (Rawalpindi, Multan, Jalandhar etc) with English being introduced as one of the subjects of study.

As far as print infrastructure is concerned, when the British then came to Punjab, they found an already existing infrastructure and support which encouraged them to modernise Punjab like the rest of India. Also, while there was an already existing nascent print infrastructure in the Punjab, yet the British played an important part in the modernisation of this apparatus through establishment of print stations in different parts of the province. Gradually then, through the combined support of the Christian missions and British imperial administrators; press became seminal in leading to the building of associated print support systems such as schools, libraries, and retailed networks⁷. Undoubtedly, this proliferation of print technology was to have a

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simultaneous effect on vernacular Indian languages and literacy of the members of different Indian communities. However, before being directly associated with the interests of the members of the Punjabi/Sikh community; the press in Punjab was strongly tied with merely British interests and a few Punjabi elite were involved only for the purpose of serving the interests of the European communities.

Interestingly, this was also a period when this wave of colonial modernisation by the British also begun to usher in a strong sense of reform and transformation amongst the members of indigenous communities. Reformist movements taking place within the Sikh community in the nineteenth century were a testimony to the same. The spirit of reform and dissent (which had begun to present itself in a rather vocal manner with the advent of the nineteenth century) definitely had roots in the Indian sensibility stretching back to the Vedas. Through movements such as Jainism and Buddhism; language, culture and identity had begun to be appropriated; so that a new consciousness could be realised through a questioning of some of the existing social orthodoxies. However, when the British begun their project of colonial modernisation and political annexation of India from the late nineteenth century onwards, they unleashed a cultural innovation and liberal ideology which was to gradually percolate to a new section of the emerging Indian intelligentsia.

These individuals, such as Ram Mohun Roy, Vidya Sagar or Syed Ahmed Khan were to become the products of combined training of the influence of Western liberal education in addition to awareness of indigenous cultural traditions. They were to become instrumental in shaping new traditions of dissent and interrogation, which further became significant, in the shaping of the socio-religious reform movements of nineteenth century India. Understandably then, the nature and spirit of this dissent was bound to be different from anything that had preceded it before. It arose from a desire to provide education to the members of one's community, while also doing away with ills, rampant in the name of conservatism and orthodoxy. There came a newer appreciation for the spirit of liberalism, individualism, and respect for personal rights.

While a beginning to most of these movements was made from the Presidency towns of Bombay, Calcutta or Madras; Punjab was to remain no exception to its growing influence. As Jones mentions, most of these movements had their origin in Punjab's cities, gradually spreading to the interior towns and then villages. Here, a detailed observation from Jones' *Socio-Religious Reform Movements* would suffice:

Each (reform movement) possessed missionaries, tract societies, parochial schools, centres of worship, systems of fund raising, bureaucracies and central associations . . . By the end of the nineteenth century, religious identity was in the process of expressing itself in combinations of symbols based on language, script and religion. (p. 121)

The most significant of these was to be the Arya Samaj movement prevalent amongst the Hindus of the Punjab in the 1880's. Interestingly, as mentioned by Jones in his book *Arya Dharm*, a lot of attacks that Dayanand was to propound on Christian religion were ironically based on his sustained contact and communication with the Christian missionaries. They also paid a close attention to the aspect of reform and education amongst the members of the community.

From the point of view of interest of this study, a lot of initial momentum with regard to the founding of the Singh Sabha Movement in the Punjab was related to a similar kind of consciousness pervading the members of Hindu community of Punjab. The legacy of the Arya Samaj, for the founders of the Singh Sabha Movement (1873) in Punjab, became tied to both- the importance of responding to colonial modernisation while also an understanding of necessity of fashioning an 'indigenous identity'.

This study is interested in analysing the link between proliferation of print technology and infrastructure in Punjab, and associated impetus to literacy within the Sikh community after the arrival of the British in Punjab. It was primarily this aspect which not only became associated with the reformist aspects of the Singh Sabha movement of 1873, but led to the commissioning of those Sikh journals which were primarily interested in coverage of Sikh education related issues towards the end of nineteenth century. While these represented an obvious assimilation of distinct aspects of colonial modernisation, they were- at the same time- significant responses in indigenous identity formation. These were to constitute, as mentioned by Sisir Kumar Das in his multi-volume *History of Indian Literature*, originary moments of modernity in the field of Indian literature. They not only represented specific reactions in formulations pertaining to vernacular language, identity and culture; but, were also a depiction of absorption of influences of colonial modernisation with regard to innovations in print technology and education.

One will now analyse the case of these Sikh journals in detail as they presented

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fascinating reactions from the point of view of native communities to measures in colonial modernisation. By the mid 1850s; presses had become quickly established in Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Gujranwala and Sialkot. In the context of the Sikh journals, it would be interesting to note that some of the early journals issued by the members of the Sikh community though stretch back to the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, yet none of them were directly related to Sikh interests. Thus, as N.S. Kapoor has noted in his remarkably written, *Punjabi Patarkari da Itihas* (1988); the first major newspapers, considered to have cemented Sikh journalism, were only issued towards the end of nineteenth century by the members of the Singh Sabha movement⁸.

They were mainly in Punjabi or English; and were commissioned in the nature of newspapers, tracts, periodicals, or weeklies with monthly and bi-monthly formats. The earliest of these journals were very clearly in the nature of documents on Sikh identity and religion with these either being issued by Singh Sabha luminaries or scholars. Their proliferation is both explained by a general impetus that was being provided to print and educational infrastructure in the Punjab with the arrival of the British; while, also an interest that the community members had begun to display in both assimilating and transforming these technologies and infrastructure.

Gradually; they however also became tied to the larger community interests of reformist nature such as language, literacy, female empowerment and democratic representation of members of the community. It is here, that by the initial decades of nineteenth century, approximately thirty journals/newspapers owned by or concerned with Sikh affairs had been commissioned. Both Amritsar and Lahore were to become the main centres of publication and initial efforts with regard to the commissioning and origins of new Sikh journals.

It is here that there came about more than one occasion on account of which both education and journalism had begun to provide encouragement to each other for the Sikh community members. The same luminaries such as Bhai Vir Singh or Gurmukh Singh or Bhagat Lakshman Singh became actively involved with the founding of organisations, supporting the cause of Sikh education (such as the Chief Khalsa Diwan), while also becoming the founders of printing presses such as the Wazir Hind Press (which was to become the main source for the publication of Punjabi literature in the coming years).

Sikh educationists also constituted the greatest number in terms of being founders of Sikh journals, and specific journals came to be commissioned towards the beginning of twentieth century as being chiefly pre-occupied with issues pertaining to Sikh education and liberalism. Some examples of the same were *Istri Satsang*, *Istri Samachar*, *Khalsa Samachar* or *Vishkarma*. The nuances of the interaction also became interesting with these intellectuals and their journals, or printing presses or literary channels being established by them, coming together in the form of these journals intensively discussing about recently published Sikh literature or annotated editions of the Sikh scriptures.

These were those years when nationalistic movement was at its peak in Punjab manifesting in the form of incidents like the Ghadar uprising, Komagata Maru or the Akali Movement. These local/regional newspapers then became a medium of how native communities were getting influenced by colonial modernisation while also being conscious of fashioning deliberate responses for preservation of one's distinctive identity. For the ambit of this paper, I will take the example of some Sikh journals circulated between the years of 1900 to 1920, which as analysed above, represented the first significant mobilisation within the Sikh community; were majorly printed from Amritsar/Lahore through the medium of small printing presses; were written in either English or Punjabi and fascinatingly decoded the influence of British colonial modernisation.

With reference to the journals as per Kapoor, the *Khalsa Samachar* became the first Sikh newspaper to present news articles with proper formatting style with all the desirable techniques⁹. Understandably, it carried significant news about Sikh education related developments and also the working of the Singh Sabhas. The editions consulted for March, 1905 carries short articles on the status of Punjabi language textbooks at Punjab University and also updates about the number of students studying in Khalsa College; its state of affairs etc.

Since this seems to be an earlier issue of the time when the forum of Sikh Educational Conference was not initiated, the coverage of education related issues seems to be limited though there are short articles of the kind titled *Istri Sikhya* (translated as women's education). There are also articles praising the state of affairs under the Sikh Kanya MahaVidyalaya, Ferozepur. A brief translation and paraphrase of the same in an edition of 1903 states, that not only has the Sikh Kanya MahaVidyalaya at Ferozepur been running with a lot of

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efficiency; but, it has also effectively transformed the manner in which women's education has been existing in Punjab and should indeed be supported by more infrastructure by the administration. There is also in articles written during this time period, an evidence of engagement on issues pertaining to the preservation of distinctiveness of Sikh identity especially, in the context of what had been the increasing missionary and Arya influences on a segment of Sikh population in the Punjab. There also seems to be an evidence of constant influence of the British administration, its modernizing influences and its specific measures for the Sikh community in most of the editorial articles carried by these newspapers¹⁰.

With regard to Sikh education related coverage, there is a lot of coverage of Sikh educational institutions, Khalsa High schools and in editions consulted for *Istri Satsang* (a weekly Punjabi newspaper initiated from Amritsar), circulating between the years of 1904-09, there were exclusive articles written on the importance of women's education (hence, titled 'Istri Sikhiya', dated May 8, 1905), general articles on the importance of education and the importance of educating the women members of the community in the light of larger vision of social reform. The format of the paper consists of quotes from the religious scriptures (titled "Ardas", "Shlokas from the Guru Granth Sahib") and also different points of view-based articles on how a woman should behave when she enters into a kitchen, into a new marriage etc.

A lot of these Sikh journals also covered a range of general news reports about the province of Punjab. One such journal was *Panjab*, issued between the years of 1905-10 from Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar. The general topics of interest included developments on the political and international front vis-à-vis British administration, coverage about ongoing arguments between different religious communities (especially on the issue of religious conversions), grievances of Punjabis settled outside and why Punjab was lacking on the development front when compared to other provinces.

There continued to be articles stating the importance of connection between language, script and identity (for instance; in the edition dated for one of the months of 1905, there is an article titled, "*Ki Gurumukhi akhar Punjabi akhar han?*" translated to mean—"Do the letters in Gurumukhi belong to the fold of Punjabi language?"). The format of the newspaper gave a lot of space to quotes, summaries and teachings from religious scriptures; while, also carrying news about Sikh temples such as Sri Nankana Sahib, Hazoor Sahib etc. From the

perspective of Sikh education, the newspaper carried detailed coverage pertaining to both the significant role of Sikh Educational Conference and the importance of education for community members in order to expand their livelihood opportunities (December 1, 1905).

In addition, there have also been a lot of newspapers during this time which exclusively focus on the issue of Sikh identity, the importance of preserving its distinctiveness and hence, the associated importance of Sikh rituals and Sikh symbols. Some of these thriving in the early part of the twentieth century were *Khalsa Akhbar*, *Khalsa Gazette*, *Panth* and *Panth Sewak*. They did write on educational issues but that was rare and brief. They did closely focus on identity-oriented issues and an interesting instance was when, the journals *Panth* and *Panjab* took the call of 'Swadeshi' extremely seriously. They exhorted the Sikhs to adopt 'Swadeshi' as the dress and symbols of the 'Khalsa,' so as to showcase the best of the nationalist spirit. Joginder Singh adds to this by observing that newspapers like *Sacha Dhandora* (Lyallpur-1906), *Panch* (Lahore-1909), *Sikh Review* (Delhi-1913), *Bir* (Amritsar-1908) and *Akali* (Lahore-1920) did take uncompromising stand on contemporary issues. This often bought them into confrontation with moderate views within their own community and some sections of the administration as well¹¹.

The developments in the field of expansion in journalism and education did find a parallel echo at the regional level as well. This spirit of a confrontational and intensely nationalistic fervor was also evident in the attitude of Sikh journals which were in circulation after 1910. The major journals which were in circulation after 1910 included names such as *Patiala Gazzette*, *Punjabi Surma*, *Phulwaari*, *Namdeva Patra*, *Ghadar*, *Ghadar-di-Goonj*, *Shahid*, *Panth Sewak*, *Ramgarhiya Patrika*, *Sach Khanda*, *Sikh Sepoy*, *Haq* or *Haq Bulletin*.

The Sikh press during the concerned period had by now adopted a rather strong approach of agitation and required dissent. This became an interesting advance from its initial careful and consciously crafted balance between moderation and reverence, majorly in its attitude towards the colonial administration in the earlier decades of twentieth century. Suddenly, extremely identity centered articulations related to the Gurudwara RikabGanj agitation and the Ghadar had started coming to the fore. Journals such as *Ghadar* and *Shahid* provided the native communities with an opportunity to mobilise members of the Sikh community to disregard peaceful modes of agitation against the British and adopt for something more revolutionary.

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Post-1910 journals like *Panth* consist of updates related to the Sikh Educational Conferences, articles in editions consulted for *Panth Sewak* directly link the importance of advancement in community education or those of the women to necessity of development of Panthic interests. In editions consulted for the *Panth Sewak* belonging to the year 1919, there is a wide and extensive coverage on issues pertaining to Sikh education. Significantly though, the coverage is largely related to how Sikh education has to be suitably modified so that it can fulfill expectations related to Panthic interests.

These have been extended to distinct fronts pertaining to Sikh education, most notable ones being the state of the Khalsa schools; infrastructural provisions in these schools; their success in the light of intended objectives; their efforts in the direction of preservation of indigenous identity and their ability to genuinely train women in the light of Khalsa principles. The characteristic in this regard have been articles titled “*Asi bahut piche haan*” (translated to indicate 'backwardness of the community', with the contents indicating, necessity of proper teaching of the Khalsa principles for community's advancement); '*Sikh Istri Vidya*' (translated to mean 'Sikh women's education' with the contents highlighting propriety of Khalsa teachings in Sikh women so that it could adequately reflect in their behavior); '*Saada Vidya Prachaar*' (translated to mean 'desired characteristics of Sikh education' with the contents indicating what more can be done in the process of establishing Khalsa institutions through the forums such as the Sikh Educational Conferences) or '*Sadachaar te Kamyaaabi*' (translated to mean 'required character for education' with the contents indicating how Guru's *baani* and teachings from his life cannot be separated from any ideal form of Sikh education).

In the light of trend of Sikh journalism during this period catering to also a lot of agitational developments in Punjab in the post-1910 years such as the First World War, Ghadar, Komagata Maru or the imposition of the Rowlatt Act; one observes that prominent Sikh journals of this period devoted to this kind of coverage. Some examples of the same were *Haq* and *Haq Bulletin* which did end up discussing a lot of issues of secular interest of which education became a significant one. Later journals like the *Akali* became representatives of positions held vis-à-vis distinctiveness of Sikh identity and why it needs to be significantly preserved.

As then clear from the above analysis, the period during the end of the nineteenth century and earlier decades of the twentieth century was one of British administration introducing colonial modernization within the Indian

subcontinent in a major way. While it did so inevitably or for its own administrative convenience, in the process, it led to fascinating responses on part of members of indigenous communities who utilized both the tools of assertion and subversion. This paper has taken the case study of Sikh journals in circulation between the years of 1900 to 1920 to showcase, how members of the native Sikh/Punjabi community carried measures in educational and cultural modernization under the influence of British, while also utilizing their voice as a medium for both nationalist agitation as well as identity assertion. This indeed provides a unique opportunity to reformulate our vantage point of conducting social enquiry pertaining to the colonial-native encounter.

Endnotes

1. These points have especially been mentioned in the “Introduction” of Yogendra Singh's *Modernization of Indian Tradition*.
2. Details taken from a reading of Surya Kant's essay “Administrative Space in British Punjab” (published in Reeta Grewal/Sheena Pall ed., anthology-Pre-Colonial and Colonial Punjab. For complete details, refer to the Reference section.
3. Interpretations derived from a reading of Hugh Trevaskis' *The Land of Five Rivers*. Refer to Reference section for complete details.
4. Published in the essay “Sikhs under Colonial Rule” from the anthology, *The Khalsa over 300 years*. Complete details in the Reference section.
5. For more details on this, see Oberoi pp. 45-50, *Construction of Religious Boundaries*. Refer to Reference section for complete details.
6. All of these details have been provided in a brilliantly documented manner in an old study (possibly authored by one of the Indian contemporaries of the British administration) by D.L. Kapur, titled *History of Development of Judiciary in Punjab*; edited and published, H.L.O. Garrett.
7. Details paraphrased from a reading of Davis Emmett's *Press and Politics in British Western Punjab*, pp. 9-13.
8. Details paraphrased from a reading of N.S. Kapoor's Punjabi book, *Punjabi Patarkari da Itihas*. Details in the Reference Section.
9. For further details on the same; see N.S. Kapoor's *Punjabi Patarkari da Vikas*, pp. 82-3.
10. Most of these journals have been accessed from archive centres at libraries in Punjab and Delhi.
11. Observations have been made from a reading of pp.153 -54 of Joginder Singh's *The Sikh Resurgence*.

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