

भद्रायां सुमतौ यतेम | -ऋग्वेद (६.१.१०)
Let us strive for the wisdom that leads to the welfare of all

Indian Education System: An Overview

**Dr. Ankur Kakkar (Indus University, Ahmedabad),
Assistant Professor**

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- Introduction
- European Accounts of Indian Education
- Colonial Surveys of Indigenous Indian Education
- Principles of Indian Education
- Conclusion

Introduction: Why this lecture?

- Is there such a thing as ‘Indian Education’?
- Was Indian education only limited to ancient centers like Taxila, Nalanda, and Vallabhi?
- Do we know the extent and nature of Indian education prior to the advent of British colonial rule?

GANDHI'S SPEECH IN LONDON (1931)



“I say without fear of my figures being challenged successfully, that **today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago**, and so is Burma, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root, and left the root like that, and **the beautiful tree perished**. [...] Our state would revive **the old village schoolmaster and dot every village with a school both for boys and girls.**”

Reference:

Extract from Gandhi's speech
at Chatham House, London
(October 20, 1931)

RAM SWARUP (1920-1998)

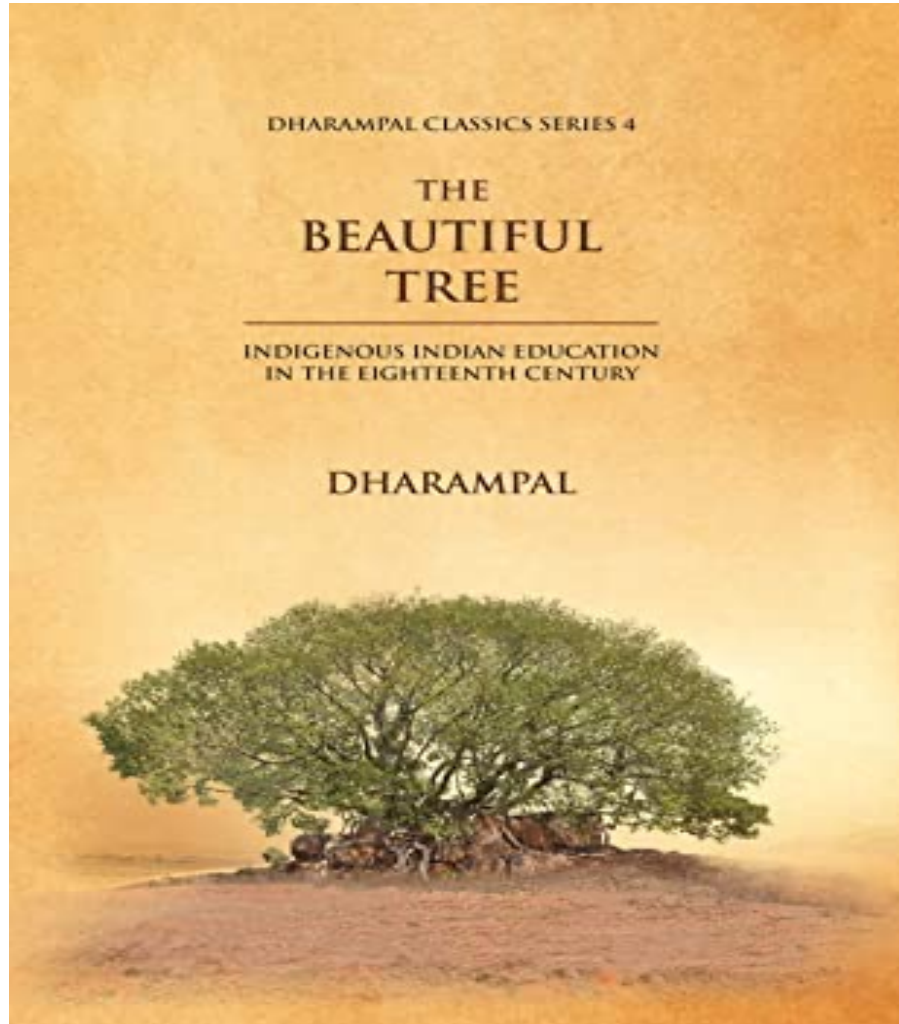


“The emphasis on spirit as the true shaping reality of man gave Indian education and culture a peculiar colour and individuality”

Reference:

Ram Swarup, *On Hinduism*,
p. 166

DHARAMPAL (1922-2006)



European Accounts of Indian Education

European Accounts of Indian Education

- Indian ideas have influenced several European thinkers such as Schopenhauer, Voltaire, Hegel and many others.
- European travellers, merchants and missionaries had been writing about the knowledge systems and practices in India since the early modern period. They were inspired by a wide range of factors including an evangelical enthusiasm, a rationalist temperament, a deep curiosity to learn about Oriental civilization or simply a penchant for keeping travelogues.

PIETRO DELLA VALLE (1586-1652)



THE TRAVELS
OF
PIETRO DELLA VALLE
IN
INDIA.

*FROM THE OLD ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF 1664,
BY G. HAVERS.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Edited, with a Life of the Author, an Introduction and Notes,

BY

EDWARD GREY

(LATE BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE).

VOL. II

LONDON :
PRINTED FOR THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY,
4, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, W.C.

M, DCCC. XCII.

PIETRO DELLA VALLE (1586-1652)

“I entertain’d myself in the Porch of the Temple beholding little boys learning Arithmetick after a strange manner, which I will here relate. They were four, and having all taken the same lesson from the Master, in order to get that same by heart and repeat likewise their former lessons and not forget them, one of them singing musically with a certain continu’d tone, (which hath the force of making deep impression in the memory) recited part of the lesson; as, for example, “ One by its self makes one;” and whilst he was thus speaking he writ down the same number, not with any kind of Pen, nor on Paper, but (not to spend Paper in vain) with his finger on the ground, the pavement being for that purpose strew’d all over with very fine sand”.



PIETRO DELLA VALLE (1586-1652)

“after the first had writ what he sung, all the rest sung and writ down the same thing together. Then the first boy sung and writ down another part of the lesson; as, for example, “Two by itself make two,” which all the rest repeated in the same manner, and so forward in order. When the pavement was full of figures they put them out with the hand, and, if need were, strew’d it with new sand from a little heap which they had before them wherewith to write further. And thus they did as long as the exercise, continu’d; in which manner likewise, they told me, they learnt to read and write without spoiling Paper, Pens, or Ink, which certainly is a prety way. I ask’d them, if they happen’d to forget, or be mistaken in any part of the lesson, who corrected and taught them? they being all Scholars without the assistance of any Master; they answer’d me and said true, that it was not possible for all four of them to forget, or mistake in the same part, and that thus they exercis’d together, to the end that if one happen’d to be out the “others might correct him. Indeed a prety, easie and secure way of learning.”

PAULINUS OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW (1748-1806)



P. PAVLINVS. A. S. BARTHOLOMÆO.
CARMEL. DISCALC. AVSTRIAC. A. 1793

A
V O Y A G E
TO THE
E A S T I N D I E S :

CONTAINING
An Account of the Manners, Customs, &c. of the NATIVES,
With a Geographical Description of the Country.

COLLECTED FROM
Observations made during a Residence of Thirteen Years,
between 1776 and 1789, in Districts little
frequented by the EUROPEANS.

BY
FRA PAOLINO DA SAN BARTOLOMEO,
Member of the Academy of Velitri, and formerly Professor of the
Oriental Languages in the Propaganda at Rome.

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JOHN REINHOLD FORSTER, LL.D.
Professor of Natural History in the University of Halle.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN
BY WILLIAM JOHNSTON.

L O N D O N.
PRINTED BY J. DAVIS, CHANCERY LANE:
AND SOLD BY VERNOR AND HOOD, POULTRY; AND
J. CUTHELL, HOLBORN.

M.DCCC.

PAULINUS OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW (1748-1806)



P. PAVLINVS. A. S. BARTHOLOMEO.
CARMEL. DISCALC. AVSTRIAC. A. 1793

“the education of youth in India is much simpler, and not near so expensive as in Europe. The children assemble half naked under the shade of a coconut tree; place themselves in rows on the ground, and trace out on the sand, with the fore-finger of the right hand, the elements of their alphabet, and then smooth it with the left when they wish to trace out other characters.”

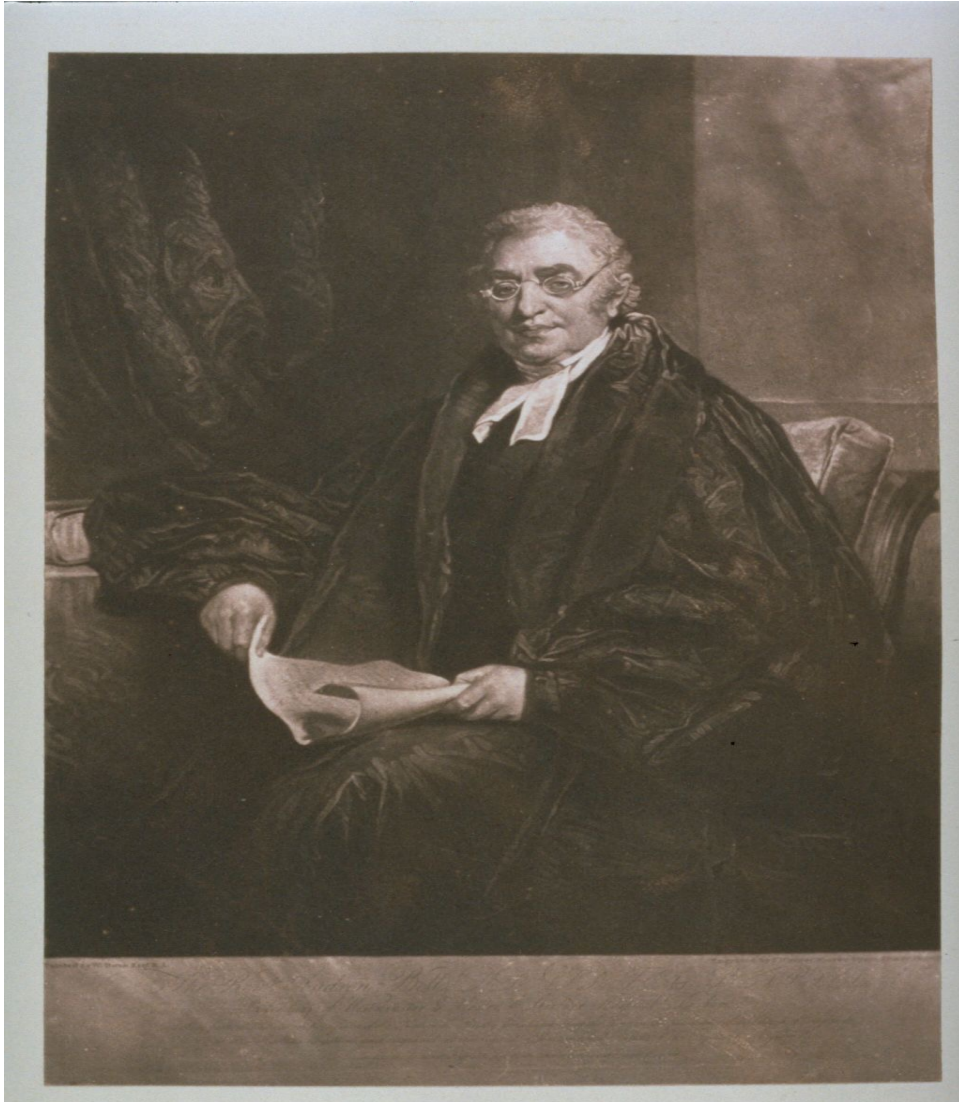
THE MADRAS MONITORIAL SYSTEM

In their first educational despatch, the Court of Directors asked officials in India to learn more about the famous monitorial system of native schools that had been recently adopted in England.

“The mode of instruction that from time immemorial has been practised under the direction of the Reverend Dr. Bell, formerly Chaplain at Madras; and it is now become the mode by which education is conducted in our national establishments, from a conviction of the facility it affords in the acquisition of language by simplifying the process of instruction. This venerable and benevolent institution of the Hindus is represented to have withstood the shock of revolutions, and to its operation is ascribed the general intelligence of the natives as scribes and accountants.”

- “Despatch, dated 3rd June 1814”, quoted in Arthur Howell, *Education in British India*, p. 6.

ANDREW BELL (1753-1832)



AN
E X P E R I M E N T
I N
E D U C A T I O N ,
M A D E A T T H E
M A L E A S Y L U M
O F
M A D R A S .

Suggesting a System by which a School or Family may teach itself under the Superintendance of the Master or Parent.

BY THE REVEREND
D R . A N D R E W B E L L ,
Late one of the Directors, and Superintendant of that
Establishment, Chaplain of Fort St. George,
A. M. F. As. Soc.

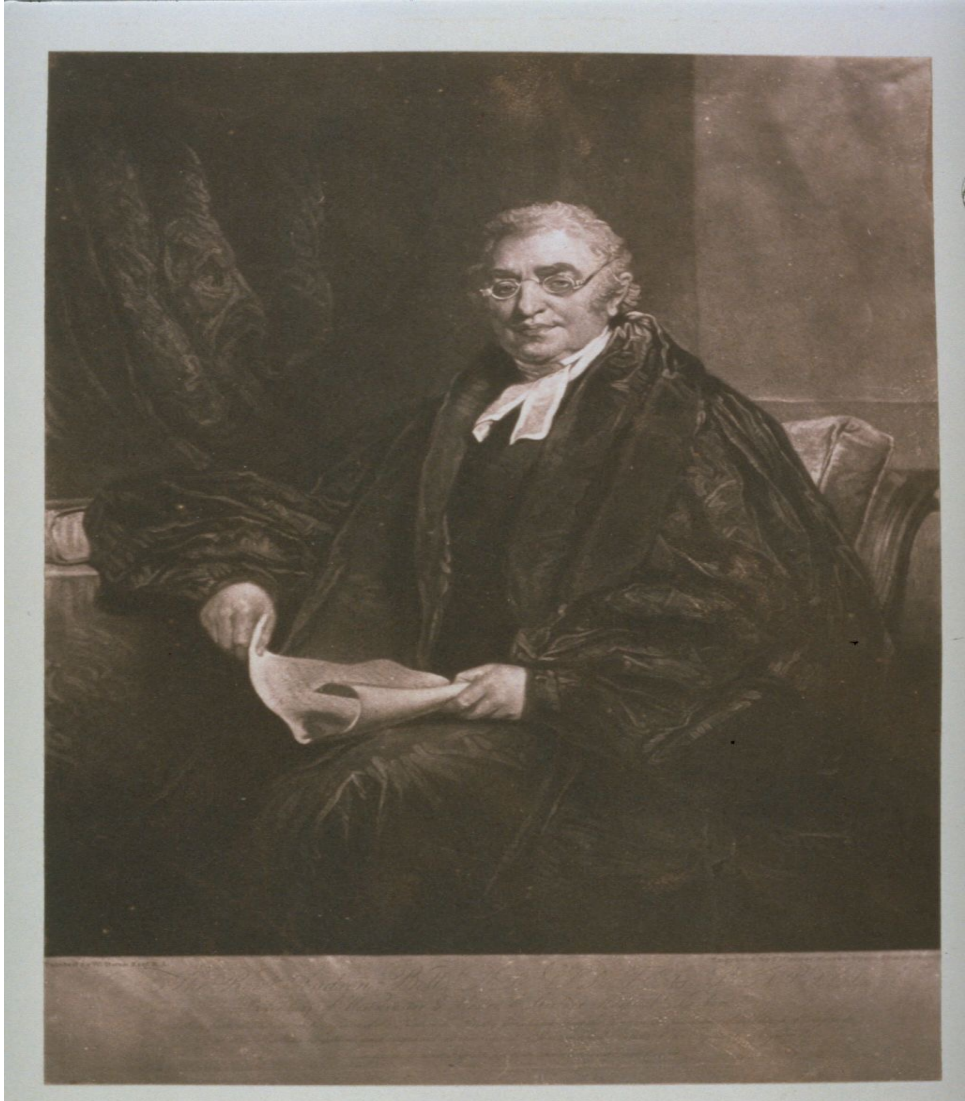
L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR CADELL AND DAVIES, IN THE
STRAND; AND W. GREECH, EDINBURGH.

1797.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

(3)

ANDREW BELL (1753-1832)



“I had, at first sight of a Malabar school, adopted the idea of teaching the letters in sand spread over a board or bench before the scholars, as on the ground in the schools of the natives of this country; a practice which, by the bye, will elucidate a passage in holy writ better than some commentators have done [...] The advantages of teaching the alphabet, by writing the letters with the fingers in sand, are many. It engages and amuses the mind, and so commands the attention, that it greatly facilitates the toil, both of the master and scholar”

Colonial Surveys of Indigenous Indian Education

SURVEYS OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Year	Survey
1796	Bartolomeo's Account of Education in India published.
1822-1826	Surveys on indigenous education carried out in Madras presidency.
1823-18	Surveys on indigenous education carried out in Bombay presidency.
1835-1838	William Adam's Reports on the State of Indigenous Education in select districts of Bengal and Bihar published after three years' of rigorous fieldwork.
1852	Report on Indigenous Education in the North Western Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) published by Thomas Reid
1870	Holwell's Education in India published
1882	Leitner's History of Indigenous Education in Panjab published
1883	Report of the First Commission on Indian Education published

LARGE NETWORK OF PATHSHALAS

Surveys revealed that

- Indian education was far superior than contemporary education in England in terms of
 - the variety of content;
 - the duration or period of study;
 - the methods of teaching;
 - the school environment (which was more natural); and the dedication of teachers (who were more committed and sober)
- There were Pathshalas and Gurukuls all over the country
 - In Bengal and Bihar, William Adam's surveys revealed that there were over 1,00,000 "village schools".
 - In Madras, Thomas Munro had remarked that "every village had a school".
 - In the Bombay presidency, there was hardly a village that did not have a school.

NO PARTICULAR CENTERS OF EDUCATION

“In a majority of instances, there is no school-house, in which case the house of the teacher, a family or village temple, an out-house of one of the parents, the hut assigned for the entertainment of travellers, the corner of a shop, the portico of a mosque, or the shade of a tree, is employed for that purpose.”

- *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 & 1838) by William Adam, p. 230.*

Caste-wise' Distribution of Students -Adam's Survey

	Murshi-dabad	Beerbhoom	Burdwan	SouthBihar	Tirhoot
Number of Schools Surveyed	–	412	629	285	80
Total Number of Students	1,080	6,383	13,190	3,090	507
1. Muslims	82	232	769	172	5
2. Christians	–	20	13	–	–
3. Hindus	998	6,131	12,408	2,918	502
CASTE-WISE DISTRIBUTION					
Brahmins	181	1,853	3,429	256	25
Kayasthas	129	487	1,846	220	51
Kaivarta	96	89	223	–	2
Savarna Banik	62	184	261	31	–
Tanti	56	196	249	1	–
Sunri	30	164	188	56	72
Teli	36	38	371	271	29
Mayrea	29	248	281	–	28
Tili	6	35	200	–	–
Aguri	5	28	787	21	17
Sadgop	2	290	1254	–	–
Gandha Banik	59	529	609	540	32
Vaidya	14	71	125	–	–
Sutar	13	50	108	–	2
Kammar	9	109	262	–	4
Rajput	7	68	21	150	62
Barayi	4	62	32	1	–
Swarnakar	11	53	81	51	25
Napit	75	79	192	39	4
Goala	19	560	311	38	8
Tamil	22	127	242	16	4
Kalu	1	258	207	–	–
Kahar	2	14	138	–	–
Bagdhi	2	14	138	–	–
Kairi	1	–	–	200	5
Magadha	–	1	–	468	18
Kumar	8	43	95	10	–
Kurmi					
Vaishnava	24	161	189	2	–
Yugi	10	9	131	8	–
Other Castes*	86	261	407	367	94

Caste-wise' Distribution of Students – Madras Survey

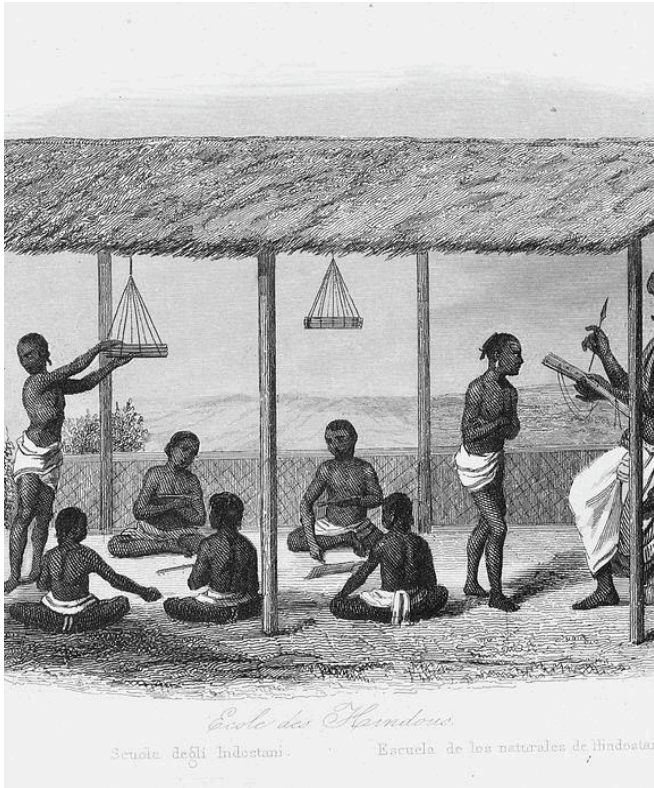
District	Brahmins	Chettris or Rajas	Vysee	Sudra	Othercastes	Muslims	Total
ORIYA SPEAKING							
1. Ganjam	808 (27.25)	—	243 (8.24)	1001 (33.76)	885 (29.88)	27 (0.91)	2965
TELUGU SPEAKING							
1. Vizagapattam	4345 (46.16)	103 (1.09)	983 (10.44)	1999 (21.24)	1885 (20.03)	97 (1.03)	9412
2. Rajahmundry	904 (34.49)	—	653 (24.91)	466 (17.78)	546 (20.83)	52 (1.98)	2621
3. Masulipatam	1673 (33.13)	18 (0.36)	1108 (21.94)	1506 (29.82)	470 (9.30)	275 (5.44)	5050
4. Guntoor	3089 (40.53)	—	1578 (20.70)	1923 (25.23)	775 (10.17)	257 (3.37)	7622
5. Nellore	2466 (32.61)	—	1641 (21.70)	2407 (31.83)	432 (5.71)	617 (8.16)	7563
6. Cuddapah	1416 (24.03)	—	1713 (29.07)	1775 (30.13)	647 (10.98)	341 (5.79)	5892
KANNADA SPEAKING							
1. Bellary	1185 (18.01)	—	981 (14.91)	2998 (45.56)	1174 (17.84)	243 (3.69)	6581
2. Seringapatam	48 (7.83)	—	23 (3.75)	298 (48.61)	158 (25.77)	86 (14.02)	613
MALAYALAM SPEAKING							
1. Malabar	2230 (18.64)	—	84 (0.70)	3697 (30.90)	2756 (23.04)	3196 (26.72)	11963
TAMIL SPEAKING							
1. North Arcot	698 (9.60)	—	630 (8.66)	4856 (66.76)	538 (7.40)	552 (7.59)	7274
2. South Arcot	997 (9.57)	—	370 (3.55)	7938 (76.19)	862 (8.27)	252 (2.42)	10419
3. Chingleput	858 (12.75)	—	424 (6.30)	4809 (71.47)	452 (6.72)	186 (2.76)	6729
4. Tanjore	2817 (16.16)	369 (2.12)	222 (1.27)	10661 (61.17)	2426 (13.92)	933 (5.32)	17428
5. Trichnopoly	1198 (11.76)	—	229 (2.25)	7745 (76.00)	329 (3.23)	690 (6.77)	10191
6. Madura	1186 (8.67)	—	1119 (8.18)	7247 (52.99)	2977 (21.77)	1147 (8.39)	13676
7. Tinnevelly	2016 (21.78)	—	—	2889 (31.21)	3557 (38.42)	796 (8.60)	9258
8. Coimbatore	918 (11.30)	—	289 (3.56)	6379 (78.52)	226 (2.78)	312 (3.84)	8124
9. Salem	459 (10.75)	—	324 (7.59)	1671 (39.15)	1382 (32.38)	432 (10.12)	4268
10. Madras City							
(i) Ordinary Schools	358 (7.01)	—	789 (15.44)	3506 (68.62)	313 (6.13)	143 (2.80)	5109
(ii) Charity Schools	52 (12.56)	—	46 (11.11)	172 (41.55)	134 (32.37)	10 (2.42)	414

* Figures in parentheses give the percentage of students in each caste group.

NO FIXED FEES

- no direct correlation between remuneration and teaching
- many teachers taught gratuitously;
- no fixed fees; "fees" varied from presents, grain, sweetmeats to bread (roti) on fixed days, and presents on holidays and marriage occasions
- the whole village community would occasionally contribute towards supporting the *pathshala*.
- *Pandits* were given endowments and tax free land grants to maintain their *Gurukuls*
 - *Agraharam* in South India
 - *Bazee Zameen* in Bihar
 - *Dakshina* fund by Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

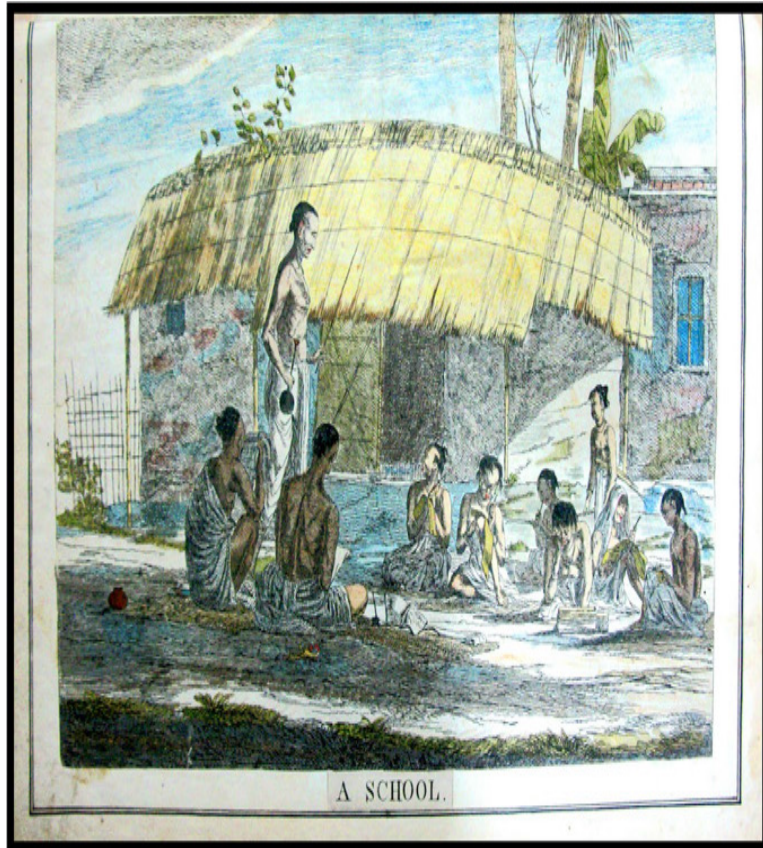


- Four stages of learning 3 Rs
 - 1st : Reading and Writing Alphabets on sand
 - 2nd : Numerical tables and use of palm-leaf.
 - 3rd : Addition, subtraction, and general arithmetic
 - 4th : writing letters, accounts, and petitions on paper, as well as in reading excerpts from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and other literature.
- Alphabets taught through poetic verses which also had moral and religious meaning
- Ethics
 - Social
 - Political
 - Moral

TEXTBOOKS FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

S.No.	Title of Book	Description
1	Dan Lila	Amusements of Krishna (Hindi)
2	Dadhi Lila	Amusements of Krishna (Hindi)
3	Guru Bandana	Composition on the virtues of Guru
4	Amar Singh	Sanskrit Vocabulary
5	Sabda Subanta	Rules of Sanskrit Orthography
6	Chanakya	Sanskrit precepts of morality
7	Ugra Balaram	Arithmetic of Ugra Balarama
8	Saraswati Bandana	Composition on the virtues of goddess Saraswati
9	Man Bhanjan	Love of Radha and Krishna
10	Kalanka Bhanjan	Love of Radha and Krishna
11	Hitopadesha	
12	Nitikotha	
13	Jyotish Bibaran	
14	Digdarshan	
15	Nitivakya	
16	Gita Govinda	
17	Ashta Dhatu	
18	Ashta Sabdi	
19	Ganga Bandana	Composition on the virtues of goddess Ganga
20	Yugadya Bandana	Composition on the virtues of goddess Durga
21	Data Karna	Story of Karna
22	Adi Parva	From Mahabharata
23	Sudam Charitra	On Sudama (childhood friend of Lord Krishna)
24	Ram Janma	From Tulsidas Ramayana
25	Sundar Kanda	From Tulsidas Ramayana
26	Surya Purana	Translated extract from the Purana
27	Sundar Sudama	

MENTAL ARITHMETIC AND ACCOUNTS



- Children were taught a wide range of mental arithmetical lessons
- Young boys could perform multiplications up to 20 times 20; and by the end of the fifteenth lesson, he would have memorized tables up to 100 times $\frac{3}{4}$.
- Elementary Gurukuls usually trained children in the keeping of both commercial and agricultural accounts

HIGHER LEARNING IN IKS DISCIPLINES

- Colonial officials referred to these Gurukuls of higher learning as “colleges”
- A wide range of such “colleges” were found where students were trained in various disciplines including *Veda, Jyotisha, Tantra, Vyakarana, Kavya, Nyaya, Dharmashatra, Ayurveda*, and so on.
- The district collectors of Madras presidency reported a total of 1,094 “colleges” with a total of 5,431 students.

Institutions of Sanscritic learning in some districts of Bengal and Bihar

	Murshi-dabad	Beer- bhoom	Bur-dwan	SouthBihar	Tirhoot	Total
Number of Institutions	24	56	190	27	56	353
Number of Students(Subjectwise)						
Grammar	23	274	644	356	127	1,427
Logic	52	27	277	6	16	378
Law	64	24	238	2	8	336
Literature	2	8	90	16	4	120
Mythology	8	8	43	22	1	82
Astrology	–	5	7	13	53	78
Lexicology	4	2	31	8	3	48
Rhetoric	–	9	8	2	–	19
Medicine	–	1	15	2	–	18
Vedum	–	3	3	5	2	13
Tantra	–	1	2	2	–	5
Mimansa	–	–	–	2	–	2
Sankhya	–	–	–	1	–	1
Total number of Students	153	362	1,358	437	214	2,524

Institutions of Higher learning in Madras Presidency

District	Number of Colleges/Teachers	Total Students	Vedum (or Theology)	Law	Astronomy(or Ganeet Sastrum)	Andhra sastrum (High Telugu Poetics)
Rajahmundry	279	1,454	1,033(198)**	358 (60)**	49 (14)**	14 (7)**
Masulipatam	49	199				
Nellore	137		(83)**	(45)**	(8)**	(1)**
Chingleput	51	398				
North Arcot	69	418	298 (43)**		117 (24)**	3 (2)**
Tanjore	109	769				
Trichnopoly	9	131				
Coimbatore	173	724	(94)**	(69)**	(10)**	
Malabar	1	75				
Guntoor	171	939				
Salem	53	324				

• While all the above districts give the number of colleges, or teachers of higher learning, many of them do not provide details regarding the number of students in them, or the divisions of the institutions into various categories

** Number of places of higher learning

PRINCIPLES OF INDIAN EDUCATION

DECENTRALISED EDUCATION

- Education was highly decentralized and customized as per local requirements.
- “Each according to his own” - everyone, from the washerman to the accountant received the kind of education they needed to perform their function in society.
- One could learn anywhere, whether it was in the village square or the hermit’s hut, all venues were places of education.

EQUALITY AND SIMPLICITY

- Education was received by people from all social classes.
- Economical ways and means of learning
 - Fees was not a prerequisite for learning
 - One teacher maintained one *pathshala*
 - Simple and modest arrangements

GURU-SHISHYA PARAMPARA

In the various domains of Indian knowledge system, whether it was veda, shastras, arts, crafts, music, dance, drama, the *gurukul* was the home of the *Guru*.

“He is to live with his master, whose home is his workshop, and is to be treated and instructed by the master as his son.”

Reference:- Radha Kumud Mukherjee, Education, in R.C. Majumdar, ed., The Age of Imperial Unity, p. 587

“The house of the teacher known as asrama or gurukula was the centre of education. The teacher accepted a student and made him a member of his family.”

Reference:- Kapil Kapoor, ed., *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, Vol. IV., p. 10-13

CONCLUSION

Conclusion: What We Learned

- Vast and vibrant education system in 18th and 19th century India.
- Everyone was educated to perform their role and earn their living.
- Education was a full-time and life-long exercise.

Indian Education System: An Overview

धन्यवाद!