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# Secondary Education in Bengal during the Dyarchy

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**Abstract-** This study analyses the case of educational developments for secondary education in Bengal during the period of dyarchy. Mainly based on the public record files of the then Education Department of Bengal, the data findings of archival sources provide an insight into the impact of educational reforms in Bengal. The article first provides an account of the visions and structures signifying change in the scope of secondary education. The discussion then proceeds with how far the desired visions could be implemented in schools of Bengal during the dyarchy years. During the years of dyarchy, a number of courses for secondary curriculum were being introduced for the sake of keeping in check the excessively dominant university preparatory Matriculation examinations. The desired visions for vocationalisation versus general subjects in the mainstream secondary schools were being implemented through introducing scores of courses of practical utility, though the economic limitations were kept in mind while moving on further. As for adopting Western knowledge trends, some experimentation could be done for teaching subjects like history, science, geography, and language, etc. The teaching of different subjects in Madrassahs (religious schools) were also brought into line with the standards of the mainstream secondary schools. In Bengal, the dyarchy years had proven some progress but the period had ended with raised concerns among the educational administrators both British and Indian.

**Key words: Dyarchy, Secondary Education in Bengal, Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, Calcutta University Commission**

## I. SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BENGAL DURING THE DYARCHY

One of the most pertinent issues of 20th century in British India was to adopt a more comprehensive secondary education scheme; which could train workers for professions and which could deal effectively with the limited scope of education which was benefitting only the then middle classes. The British government made formal assurances to address these issues through different measures like education policy of 1904, the resolution of 1913, the deliberations of Conference of Directors of Public Instruction in 1917, and the Calcutta University Commission (CUC) Report in 1919. The CUC, comprising of highly educated Indians, had prepared their report on the basis of survey findings form different educational situations in the Indian subcontinent. Submitting its report in March 1919, the Commission observed that an over-influence of public examinations had unduly narrowed down the scope of secondary education and that lack of periodical inspections of schools had further lowered the standard of education. Therefore, it proposed to establish provincial boards of high school and intermediate education that should be independent of the control of existing education departments (Sharma, and Sharma, *History of Education in India*, p.135). Moreover, in response to the Resolution of British Government adopted in 1913 about relieving the universities of their jurisdiction to recognise high schools (Biswas and Agrawal, Development of Education in India, pp.41-42), the CUC report held with firm conviction that taking away the power of schools' recognition from the university 'would arouse deep resentment in the presidency and would excite widespread opposition' and 'would be regarded as a menace to educational freedom' (Calcutta University Commission, 1917-19, p.30). While the CUC report had stressed for bringing reforms in educational administration, the Montague-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 went a step further when suggesting for a more representative administration of Indians themselves and for adopting a diversified curriculum in schools. The focus of this article rests on educational developments in British Bengal during post-Montford reforms also known as the period of dyarchy. Initiated through Government of India Act 1919, the dyarchy in British India served as the forerunner of subsequent provincial autonomy in secondary education adopted through the Government of India Act, 1935.

## II. VISIONS AND STRUCTURES FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORMS DURING THE DYARCHY

In June 1919, Sir Edwin S. Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India when moving the Bill of self-government in India for its second reading in the House of Commons, mentioned that under British

administration of education system in India, 'a very small fraction of the population' was trained to be highly educated and 'a very large proportion of the population' had remained uneducated at all. Likewise, to him, 'harsh customs and precepts of castes' had not only created 'the great differences of race and religion' but had also led to 'great difficulties' (Keith, 1985, pp.219-220). 'There is no greater stimulus to education than by setting to the population a common task to do together, to work out the prosperity of their country', said Montagu with vigour (cited in Keith, 1985, p.220).

With the introduction of dyarchy, education was adopted as a transferred subject among other subjects of public welfare such as health, local bodies, etc. (Pathak, 2007, p.51; Sharma and Sharma, 2004, p.144). This had implied a shift of authority in transferred subjects such as education, agriculture, and public works from the centre to the regions (James, 1997, pp.459-60). Montagu envisioned those reforms as a step towards self-government that was meant for the inclusion of Indian middle classes in order to win their confidence and to provide strength to the British government in India. However, Montford reforms could not escape criticism. The members of the House of Commons put forward that reforms were responsible for exclusion of 'five million literate Indians and nearly all ex-servicemen' because of the condition of property ownership that was a must for getting elected. Both rightists and leftists in the House of Commons had raised their concerns against self-government in India where conservatives feared that British government would lose its control over India with the introduction of self-government principle; and leftists held in debate on the bill in June 1919 that the reforms were still not democratic in spirit and that the diversity of Indian masses should be taken into account while implementing the principle of self-government in India (James, 1997, p.460).

Indian educational affairs were placed in the charge of a Minister who was appointed by the Governor from amongst the elected members of the provincial legislature; and was assisted by the Director of Public Instruction of the respective Provincial Education Department (Holme, 1923, p.3; Chanda, 1939, p. 14). However, the Central Government had kept under its control the educational affairs of North Frontier Province, Delhi, Ajmer, Marwada, Bangalore, and Baluchistan. It also exercised its control over the universities of Delhi, Banaras, and Aligarh as well as over colleges and schools being run for Indian princes. Such developments had certainly raised suspicion among Indian leaders (Sharma and Sharma, 2004, p.144). Analysing the state of general secondary education in various areas of Bengal presidency, the Calcutta University Commission (CUC) had also identified 'the need for a new departure' that could be ensured through adopting liberal education in India (Calcutta University Commission, 1919, p.ix). Lamenting about the existing state of schooling in the majority of Indian schools, where according to the CUC even the essentials of a liberal education were missing, the commission declared:

'In the great majority of them, physique and health are neglected; there is no training of the hand; the study of nature is practically ignored; the aesthetic and emotional sides of a boy's nature are disregarded; corporate life is meagre: training through responsibility is generally undeveloped; little guidance is given as to right and wrong' (p.92).

The commission had expressed its regrets over the existing state of secondary education in Bengal where only a few schools were imparting hardly any basics of liberal education. It was feared that secondary education in Bengal, which was presenting 'one of the gravest defects in the education system of Bengal' if continued in its existing form, would 'produce an academic proletariat [sic], hungry, discontented and inept': and therefore there was a desperate need to bring about educational improvement simultaneously with the efforts towards mass education (Calcutta University Commission, 1919, p.25). Such desired progress had required the system to simultaneously adapt to the modern industrialisation needs through vocationalisation of education and to protect the liberal ways of life by adopting well planned general education scheme.

The CUC re-defined the following secondary school curriculum scheme of studies for the Matriculation and School-leaving Certificate examination:

1. The headmaster should be required to certify that every student being presented for the examination had satisfactorily received 'a course of instruction of a kind and at a stage approved by the Board' in each of the following list of subjects:

i). Introduction to natural science, including the teaching of elementary hygiene;

ii). History of India; History of the British Empire;

iii). Drawing and manual training.

2. Every candidate should be required to appear in the Matriculation examination of at least five subjects, out of which the four subjects of vernacular, English, elementary mathematics and geography (including physical geography) would be compulsory, while the students would have a choice to offer from one of the subjects of a classical language (Bengali-speaking Muslims allowed to offer Urdu as an alternative to one of the languages

being identified as classical), an approved scientific subject (a number of alternative courses being allowed for his choice, one of these being of the nature of a general introduction to science), additional mathematics, and last but not the least History of India and History of the British Empire (Report of the Calcutta University Commission, 1919, pp.71-72).

The Matriculation and School-leaving Certificate Scheme (MSCS) was further defined when the Senate of Calcutta University published its draft Matriculation Regulations describing Matriculation examination as 'a general test of fitness for a course of university studies' (Holme, 1923, p.33). The regulations comprised of the following somewhat detailed list of subjects that were required for Matriculation Examination:

Table: The MSCS Suggests Curriculum Organisation for Secondary Schools

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 Compulsory Subjects with No. of Papers | 1. Vernacular – 3<br>2. English – 2<br>3. Mathematics – 1<br>4. Geography – 1 |
| At least 1but not more than 2 of the Optional Subjects | A third language, that is, Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Armenian, Latin, Greek, Syriac, French, German, and Indian vernacular other than the vernacular already taken as the compulsory subject;<br>Drawing and practical geometry;<br>Mensuration and Surveying;<br>Experimental mechanics;<br>Elementary Science (Physics and Chemistry);<br>Hygiene including first aid;<br>Such other subjects as may be prescribed from time to time by the Senate — One Paper. |
| A certificate of fitness of each candidate for at least one of the subjects. | Agriculture and Gardening<br>Carpentry<br>Smithy<br>Typewriting<br>Book-keeping<br>Shorthand<br>Spinning and Weaving<br>Tailoring and Sewing<br>Music<br>Domestic economy<br>Telegraphy<br>Motor engineering and drawing |

Source: Holme, J. W. (1923). *Sixth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal, 1917-18 to 1921-22.* Government of Bengal, Ministry of Education. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. p.33.

The suggested scheme could be compared with the 1917 regulations of the British government for the School Certificate Examination in England; which had required an examination of the three groups of subjects, including English subjects, foreign languages and science and mathematics. While the former was more pro-vocational in nature, the latter had aimed at ensuring 'a balance between the arts and sciences and the neglect of practical subjects in English secondary schools' until the suggested grouping system had ended in 1947 (Webster, 1976, p.210).

To Webster, the Commission had insisted that, conditional upon favourable public opinion and an increased expenditure from public funds, the reconstruction and re-organisation of the secondary education was an essential need of the hour (1976, p.210). The CUC had observed that an over-influence of public examinations had unduly narrowed down the scope of secondary education and that lack of periodical inspections of schools had further lowered the standard of education. Therefore, it proposed to establish provincial boards of high school and intermediate education that should be independent of the control of existing education departments (Sharma, and Sharma, 2004, p.135). The Commission further recommended that secondary and intermediate education institutions should be placed under the control of provincial boards of secondary education but the power of recognition of secondary schools should be left with the university (Mukerji, 1962, p.10). That recommendation was a response to British Government's 1913 Resolution about relieving the universities of their jurisdiction to recognise high schools and that the state

should not completely withdraw from the sphere of secondary education (Biswas and Agrawal, 1994, pp.41-42). Seeing the Calcutta University as 'one of the safety valves of non-official opinion in educational affairs', the CUC commented about the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Instruction over secondary schools that 'education should not be controlled in all its vital issues by a bureaucracy … acting in the name of the Government' (Report of Calcutta University Commission, 1919, p.31).

Under new arrangements, the control over secondary education in Bengal was exercised on power-sharing basis between the government acting through its executive officers and the Education Department, the Calcutta University and the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka. In 1921, the British Government of India established Dhaka University and also established the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (B.I.S.E.), Dhaka on temporary basis (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.15). The B.I.S.E. was entrusted with the responsibility of academic control over 15 high schools in the area that was being given under the jurisdiction of Dhaka University and 27 high madrassahs in the province of Bengal.

Another important development of early 1920s was the creation of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in 1921 that was assigned with responsibilities to make recommendations on educational matters of significance that were referred to it (Mukerji, 1962, p.16). However, to National Council of Educational Research and Training, in 1923 the CABE and the Central Bureau of Education were abolished (1965, p.2). The Education Department was merged with the Department of Health and Agriculture giving rise to the Department of Education, Health and Agriculture that worked under the authority of a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (Mukerji, 1962, p.16).

As a matter of fact, while the suggested reforms in educational administration had allowed some share to the provincial and local units, the centralised control was being retained effecting the main policy and nature of secondary education in India. That was evident by keeping the control of secondary education with the existing and newly established universities; which were bound to speak for academic knowledge versus manual knowledge of vocational virtues. The emerging themes for secondary education affecting the post 1919 period were focussed on highlighting the significance of general or comprehensive education rather than either emphasising the knowledge of hands or heart at the expense of each other. Moreover, the post 1919 period was a period of experimenting in the educational administration and knowledge patterns being adopted for secondary schools. The following discussion presents the on-going change/continuity of curricular patterns for secondary education.

## III. Implementing the desired visions in schools of Bengal during the dyarchy years

During early years of the dyarchy, the new scheme of MSCS in Bengal had received a slow recognition. To Hornell (1918, p.32), the two different sets of syllabi had already been working in the West and East of Bengal; consisting of the Presidency and Burdwan divisions (West Bengal) and Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions (East Bengal). Certainly, the matriculation examination had 'long conditioned the curriculum' and the traditional methods of instruction in secondary schools had remained in vogue even during the early years of Montford reforms (Holme, 1923, p.62). The early post Montford reforms period had claimed scores of noteworthy changes in the curriculum implementation and further realisations on the part of the government to improve. Among these were included some developments in the fields of general versus vocational knowledge in schools, adoption of English language vis-à-vis vernacular in schools, and some promising trends in adopting patterns of Western knowledge and pedagogic style to improve educational standards in Indian schools. The following provides a detailed analysis of these in Bengal during dyarchy:

## IV. The significance of Vocational versus General Subjects

During the early post Montford reforms period, when certain changes were being made in the secondary school syllabi in Bengal, those changes had mostly affected the optional subjects; and the limited scope of the secondary school curriculum, that had previously provoked the concerns of educational administrators, was being held true even for the quinquennium of 1917-1922. Similarly, the experimental venture of offering the subjects of hygiene, nursing, needle-work, cookery and domestic science for girls in secondary schools had also met a failure; and the schools offering those subjects had reverted back to the original scheme of syllabi that was in accord with the matriculation scheme (Holme, 1923, p.62). However, that did not suggest a total failure in the educational progress of schooling in Bengal.

The new Legislative Council of 1921 expressed its 'keener critical spirit' and 'an enthusiastic desire to assist the new Minister to remedy some of the more obvious defects in educational practice and provision' in Bengal (Holme, 1923, p.97). In this reference, the Indian members of the Council had successfully received government approval for adopting a scheme of vocational education in general and an approval for the introduction of 'satisfactory courses' in hand-spinning and weaving in those schools which had wished for and were able to adopt them (Holme, 1923, pp.97-98). However, due to the lack of 'well-defined aims' of technical education, various vocational subjects like spinning, weaving, carpentry, tailoring, soap-making, metal work, basket making, dyeing, music, typewriting, and even agriculture were being randomly taught in secondary schools during 1920s; and other than few exceptions, secondary schools were unable to produce vocational training in 'the strict sense of the term in the ordinary school' in Bengal (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.39). Therefore, it did not take Bengal Education Department long to assert that while demands for vocatioanlisation were 'real', their implementation in the mainstream secondary schools was unrealistic, uncritical and extremist (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.39). The Department's concerns were certainly in consonance with the deliberations of the Imperial Education Conference of 1923 when the former had expressed their concern about the unrealistic letting of the 'invasion of secondary schools by the so-called vocational subjects' for the sake of coping with the issue of unemployment that the people had attributed to the literary secondary education in the province (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.39).

The prevailing issues facing Indian secondary education were also brought home in the Imperial Education Conference of 1923. Although it was agreed in the Conference that 'the cultivation of a practical element in education' was a must, reservations were also uttered about the strengthening of mere vocational element at the expanse of general education in schools. There was an agreement that the instruction in schools up to the age of 14 should be general aiming to develop 'common equipment for life and citizenship' and which 'should not be subordinated to the specific needs of particular industries or professions' (Tomlinson, 1924, p.3.) That vision was further strengthened when, in the Imperial Conference of 1926, the Secretary of State for the Colonies mentioned that the British Government would make efforts to replace 'a purely literary education, not suited to the needs of the natives' with the one that would suit their aptitude; would also safeguard 'all the sane and healthy elements in the fabric of their own social life'; would aim at building their character; and making them useful in their indigenous environment rather than the environment of a country like Great Britain' (Whitehead, Education in British Colonial Independencies, 1981, p.78).

In September 1928, the question of introduction of teaching of music in secondary schools in Bengal was also brought up in a representative conference under the presiding authority of the Director of Public Instruction. Meeting in the office of the DPI in July 1929, higher educational officers discussed that a musical Advisory Board should be established to advice the DPI about 'the teaching of Indian music in secondary schools and to take steps for the encouragement and improvement of musical education in Bengal'(Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.136). To Hartog Committee of 1929, the solution for prevailing problems had rested in introducing diversified curriculum in the middle vernacular schools favouring rural vocations and the 'diversion of more students to industrial and commercial vocations ending their middle school studies, and by providing a range of courses in technical and industrial high schools (Ghosh, 1995, p.153). In general, educational administrators in Bengal had believed in efforts to adopt such 'educational handwork' for secondary schools that could promote necessary 'hand and eye training'; and to devise a system of technical education imparted in technical schools for those students who would be unable to continue their general studies in schools (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.39). However, the injudicious combination of subjects that were taught in secondary schools had neither led to a particular career nor to 'a satisfactory basis for higher study' (Tomlinson, 1924, p.41).

The case of vocational education for girls was also taken up in Bengal with some enthusiasm since it was then being identified as the 'most important need in India', and the 'only hope of the satisfactory reordering of the whole social economy' (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.67). The revised syllabi in most of the newly opened schools had included subjects of practical utility like domestic science, drawing and painting, music and dancing, special subjects of needlework, hygiene and cookery, music and fine arts etc. where students had shown their keen interest towards a tendency to 'revive Indian designs' in handwork (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.74). Moreover, there was no less expression of girls in their interest towards the Girl Guide training, games and drill which were made a part of the routine exercises in schools (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.71). Efforts towards practical utility were not merely restricted to general education subjects, perhaps calls for enhancing the scope of agricultural subjects with reference to their practical utility were as equally need of the hour.

The Imperial Education Conference of 1923 had also discussed at length 'the special means of educating the different non-European races within the Empire with a view to developing their highest usefulness to themselves and to the Empire'; hence advocated the adoption of a general scheme of secondary education coupled with the vocational elements with particular emphasis on agricultural education in the agricultural land of the Indian subcontinent (Tomlinson, 1924, p.2). The Education Department of Bengal had slowly recognised the need to adopt practical agriculture in schools. It was in 1927 when Bengal's Education Department announced the adoption of agricultural education in schools on the lines of agricultural education in Punjab; and had adopted the textbook from Punjab making certain re-adjustments to the textbook in accordance with the conditions in Bengal (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, pp.40-41). The department appreciated that 80 years after the implementation of the Education Despatch of 1854 which had suggested teaching of practical agriculture in schools, the Bengal Education system had finally adopted 'a definite scheme of agricultural education' in schools. The scheme was being launched with its three-fold objectives, that is, 'giving a more practical turn to a system hitherto purely literary', 'emphasising the dignity of manual labour' and 'providing a stimulus to agriculture for a population mainly agricultural' (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.3). Moreover, it was not difficult to find adoption of other Western knowledge trends in the schools of Bengal.

## V. FINDING COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN WESTERN TRENDS AND THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT OF BENGAL

The implementation of Montford reforms had proved challenging for the government of Bengal striving to make the existing patterns of indigenous knowledge compatible with the Western knowledge practices. And some progress could be seen in this reference. For instance, as far as the development of the existing methods and subjects of instruction in Bengal's schools were concerned, certain experiments were made in the two training colleges of Calcutta and Dhaka respectively. Those experiments had aimed at understanding the important aspects of the 'most elementary principles of child psychology and the up-to-date western methods of teaching the common subjects of curriculum' (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, pp.137-138). Covering a range of school subjects, including history, science, geography, language learning, etc., those experiments had provided an opportunity to adopt and adjust the western methods of instruction to the usual classroom conditions of Indian schools. Moreover, for the sake of enhancing boys' attainment in different subjects of different classes, Khan Bahadur Moula Bukhsh, the then Inspector of Schools, performed experiments with the help of teachers to achieve the set targets (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.140). It was believed that the tested norms could be used for the class appraisal in a subject and for the selection of students for admission. In 1925, on the advice of the then Governor of Bengal, an annual conference of teachers and inspectors and other people associated with education was being organised in order to encourage teachers to develop their teaching methods by adopting modern pedagogic skills (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.140). While the conference had ended with some uncertainty about the 'way of improving methods of teaching', some teachers in certain schools took a start with experiments on the Dalton Plan, supervised study, project method, and silent reading (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.140).

In addition to the aforementioned efforts towards educational improvement, the case of Muslims' education in madrassahs was also brought to the fore. Concerns were being expressed against the fact that factors that had kept the Muslims' education underdeveloped during early years of the dyarchy, had remained the same even during 1920s-1930s. It was believed that, in addition to the 'general apathy' of Muslims against liberal education in ordinary schools, the increasing poverty of most of the Muslim farmers and agriculturists of low income due to the agricultural depression, and the preference of Muslim parents for sending their children only to those madrassahs and maktabs that were imparting a mix of Islamic and secular education vis-à-vis the mainstream secondary schools were all contributing to the slower development of Muslims' education in Bengal (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.79).

In September 1928, setting itself to the task of bringing the syllabus of reformed madrassahs in line with the general education imparted in mainstream secondary schools, the Board of Intermediate Education of Bengal also convened a conference. It was believed that although revisions of the curricula of such madrassahs had been made at various instances, further modifications were still required in order to bring the level of subjects of English, Arabic, vernacular and mathematics taught in those reformed madrassahs in line with the level of those subjects taught in high schools (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.82).

While the Education Department had appreciated the value of different experimental ventures for education improvement, it had equally cautioned about the need for adaptations within those western tests for their

effective use in India. Concerns were further expressed about the fact that, in India where indigenous system of teaching had 'their roots in mere memory work and purely literary forms of training', and where rather the indigenous system of education had determined the 'character of western education, it was certainly not beyond reality that adoption of modern modes of teaching would take longer (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.82). Saying this, in Bengal satisfaction was expressed over the healthy influences in the form of Red Cross activities for boys and Girl Guide activities for girls and other physical activities. Such developments were also conducive for improving the compatibility of secondary education with reference to urban-rural needs, hence preparing students for active involvement in living activities. At least in theory, these developments were also highlighting a departure from what the Bengal government had believed as an 'obsession' for Matriculation as the 'only goal' of secondary education (Government of Bengal, Darjeeling, Resolution No. 1259T.Edn. p.4).

During late 1920s, financial depression had struck Bengal and the situation had remained true even during early 1930s. The Bengal Education department had reported with grave concern that communal riots had caused a 'feeling of insecurity' that had led to a temporary drop in enrolment in certain areas; political turbulence had 'undermined discipline' within schools and had also 'affected the numerical strength'; and last but the worst of all was reported to be the economic stringency that had caused a serious setback to the students' enrolment in schools, and the discontinuance of various educational projects that had previously received administrative sanction for their implementation (Mitra, and Zachariah, 1933, p.3). In the wake of the economic depression prevailing within the province, various proposals for improvement had remained unimplemented.

As far as finding compatibility between the social needs of Bengal and out-puts of secondary education system in the province was concerned, the ending years of the dyarchy in Bengal had raised concerns. It was feared that education system in Bengal had proved deficient to fulfil needs of a predominantly rural and agricultural land of Bengal. The system was criticised for producing educated young boys who were rather 'better adapted' for employment in towns 'as clerks or at best in one of the limited number of learned professions' (Chanda, 1939, p.3). Realising the problems relating to secondary education in Bengal, the Government of Bengal in its resolution on Education No. 2517 Edn., dated 27th July 1935 held:

The result for education has been disastrous. What was bad has become worse and what was tolerable had in many instances become bad. Improvements long meditated and long overdue had to be postponed indefinitely and instead of even normal progress, there was at many points a visible retrogression. (Chanda, 1939, p.2).

In 1935, in order to deal with the problems of secondary education in Bengal, the then Education Minister of Bengal ordered an educational survey. Similarly, in the following year, the Bengal Education Week of 10 days was also organised at his call. Over 16,000 teachers and renowned educationists from within and outside Bengal held meetings and discussions about educational problems in Bengal. Furthermore, several committees with official and non-official membership were appointed to work towards 'launching a comprehensive scheme of educational reconstruction in the future' (Chanda, 1939, p.3). While such efforts could be taken as positive moves of the government in paying attention to the needs of the society, the recommended measures for the reconstruction still needed to prove the test of time through their implantation. Moreover, the provincial government also lamented the lack of interest on the part of the legislative council to resolve educational problems of urgent importance that were adding to the further deterioration of the system (Chanda, 1939, p.15). It was believed that various issues had remained unattended which included an inadequate provision for vocational education, the undue encouragement given to a purely literary type of education, demand for the development of primary and secondary education of girls, and the unsatisfactory nature of the existing 'dual control' of secondary education, etc. (Chanda, 1939, p.15). Similarly, the persisting problems had also involved issues of 'overlapping of various experiments and wastage of energy and money', and the non-uniform development of education in various pockets of British India (Chanda, 1939, p.15). With reference to curricular change, some progress could be achieved for the vocational and agricultural knowledge imparted in schools. The concept of utility of educated Indians had changed gradually from merely their training into clerks to their training as technical experts who could be hired for the lower grade technical jobs in urban areas and for improving agricultural productivity in rural areas.

During late 1930s, when education became a provincial subject under the Government of India Act 1935, new developments took place in the form of reports from bodies like Central Advisory Board of Education, Abbott-Wood report of 1937, the secondary Education Bill in Bengal, etc. But the real challenge ahead was keeping up with the pressures of World War II especially when the British Government had announced their active involvement in the war. The question as to what and to which extent certain

secondary education developments took place in Bengal during World War II years and even beyond calls for further research.

## VI. Conclusion

The case of dyarchy or Mont-ford reforms is treated, in some writings, as something beyond reality to be associated with what is called 'renaissance' in educational matters of India (Prakash, 1974, p.340). The data findings of archival sources reveal that in Bengal the impact of educational reforms during dyarchy had revealed a mixed impact. During the years of dyarchy, the undue dominance of university preparatory Matriculation examinations in Bengal was checked by introducing a number of courses in secondary curriculum. Similarly, the case of introducing vocational subjects vis-à-vis general subjects was also taken up with caution for the reasons of economy and the diverse patterns of already existing knowledge forms in Bengal. And that, experiments were also made towards adopting western methods of teaching for subjects like history, science, geography, and language, etc. in the mainstream schools of Bengal. Last but not the least; efforts were also made to bring the teaching of different subjects in Madrassahs (religious schools) into line with the standards of the mainstream secondary schools. In Bengal, the dyarchy years had brought some development but the period had ended with raised concerns among the educational administrators.

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