

## **The Role of Vernacular Press in Subcontinent During the British Rule: A Study of Perceptions**

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### **Abstract**

*The social system of India and its philosophy of life have been matured with the relic of different civilizations. Coming of Portuguese to the settlement of British in India marked the great impact of modern western science and philosophy upon the Indian world. This geographical area witnessed ubiquitous of changes in the period of English rule which determined its importance in the realm of history and philosophy. Its historical patterns have been discussed by different historians with the explanation of socio-political and economic factors and under this pattern of growth vernacular press made a robust effort to indicate a conflict in perception and practice. Effectiveness of general administration and the response of the public are the areas of concern to this study. This study manifests the general perception of the English rule and orient of the locale to mark the conflict which ultimately led to the emergence of spirit of oneness among the Indians.*

**Keywords:** English Rule; Vernacular Press; Reorient of Values; Patterns of Administration; Conflict of Perceptions

### **I. Introduction**

Sub-continent is being considered a geographical entity with varied boundaries in different periods of time in spite of internal rifts and external invasions. Its historical existence has remained under query for the traditional and modern developments. The epochs of Indian history are determined by the appearance of foreign influences from time to time. The social system of India and its philosophy of life have been matured with the relic of different civilizations. Coming of Portuguese to the settlement of British in India marked the great impact of modern western science and philosophy upon the Indian world. This geographical area witnessed ubiquitous of changes in the period of English rule which determined its importance in the realm of history and philosophy. Its historical patterns have been discussed by different historians with the explanation of socio-political and economic factors.

C.h.Philips in his edited book *Historical Writings on the Peoples of Asia: Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* made valuable observation on the historical

sources used by the different authors, and on those forces of history which were taken up to determine the outlook of historical process. He also delineated them on behalf of their explanatory factors. In this book one of the article of J.B.Harrison on 'Moreland as Historian' clearly depicts the nature of the historian that favorably lined-up with those who have given primacy to the economic factors in constructing the history. Here the reference to this logic is simply to put the thrust on the evaluation of that system which beholds the British Empire united. Here effectiveness of general administration and the response of the public are the areas of concern to this study. This study manifests the general perception of the English. The British had a "general feeling that they were ideally qualified to rule", that they had a "racial superiority" (James, 1994).

Some of the Britishers believe that local people were resistant when reforms were not in accord with the social tendency of local people. Some of the English administrators had a view that they would give peace and security, justice and mercy, but interfere with local society as little as possible to its own devices. Men like the Abbe Raynal and James Forbes found much merit in the ancient ways of life as well as depth in traditional thought (Spear, 2001). One of the seventeenth century missionary and empiricist Abbe Dubois published a text on the people of India and held a view that Europeans should "leave their cherished laws and prejudices, since no human effort will persuade them to give up, even in their own interests and let us [the Europeans] not risk making the gentlest and most submissive people in the world furious and indomitable by thwarting them" (Dirks, 2001). This kind of thought and attitude had an inbuilt conflict which could not be resolved so easily in the environment which was alien to the British and the Europeans. British reacted to any possible act which was not in according to their perception.

In British India, the Vernacular Press Act enacted in 1878 to curtail the freedom of the Indian (i.e., Non-English) press, proposed by Lord Lytton, then Viceroy of India (governed 1876–80). The act was intended to prevent the vernacular press from expressing criticism of British policies—notably, the opposition that had grown with the outset of the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–80). The act excluded English-language publications. It elicited strong and sustained protests from a wide spectrum of the Indian populace (Philips, et al., 1965). Over this Act of 1878 one of vernacular newspaper, the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* gave its remarks in these words:

*"the abuse of the liberty of the press by Hindoostanees has at last forced government to place restrictions. Indeed the liberty of the press had, in the hands of the vernacular journalists, degenerated into unbridled license. Not only the government but also the native chiefs, native officers and gentlemen were displeased with the attitude of the vernacular press towards them. With a view to maintain peace and order, and protecting Her Majesty's subjects libelous attacks, an Act was passed on the 14<sup>th</sup> March which made all those offences which used to be committed under the cloak of liberty, cognizable offences" (IOR., Vernacular Newspapers Report, 1878, P.228).*

## **II. Paradox of Rule**

In this article it is explored how the system was perceived in its effectiveness by vernacular press of second half of nineteenth century and how far the British were legitimize in the execution of their thought, manifested in their practical aspects. So this paper will present the critique of vernacular press on the British rule in India in the later

half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for the direct control of India by the British parliament after the war of independence 1857.

Such kind of evaluation will unfold the general patterns of English rule which remained intact a period of more than hundred years. English rule is generally described a just rule due to some of the connotations and the characteristics which are exemplified and practiced in the form of institutions. British came to subcontinent as traders and with their ability of managing the affairs of the company brought them in contact with the state functionaries of the 16th and 17th centuries of the subcontinent. Where the English people brought a revolutionary change in their social life due to the advancement of their knowledge in all the fields of their life, they experimented this in the colonies to bring their cultural pattern at the benchmark of their own civilization. British established their supremacy through the discipline of the company's servants. That discipline had a moral content as well as an effective legal sanction. The life of India underwent a change which was still not being absorbed due to divisiveness of the society and conflicting values of the east and the west.

Vincent A. Smith expressed his views about the role of the British in the sub-continent that

*"We can find the significance of British [rule in] India. The British were the harbingers of the west, at times unconsciously, at times with optimistic zeal, and at times with reluctance or dislike, they were the vehicles of western influence in India. That is why their influence in India has proved creative... the British provided the bridge for India to pass from the medieval world of the Mughals to the new age of science and humanism" (Smith, 2001).*

The civilizations of the east had long been regarded with respect if not with approval by the men of the west. They were admitted to the powerful and talented if erring and sometimes hostile European civilization was regarded as the most advanced civilization, it was only a *primus inter pares*. The rationalist movement of the eighteenth century in the West changed all this. Its devotees believed that reason had given Europe the key to indefinite progress, that this principle and the sciences which sprang from it, made European civilization different in kind as well as in degree to all others. It laid the intellectual foundation of the European superiority complex of the nineteenth century. These views developed in England into the vigorous utilitarian school. Adam Smith in economics, Jeremy Bentham in ethics and James Mill in logic and philosophy attacked old positions and advocated new remedies. Their view of India was supplied by James Mill in his 'History of British India' in which Mill found little good in Indian institutions; Indian thought was puerile; its religion superstitious [and] its customs hidebound (Mill, 1826).

This is the thinking and attitude which visualized the progress of humanity at one end but on the other hand it obstructed the other patterns which had its own lifeline which was indigenous in nature i.e., social customs and practices. The other side of their rule was also recognized by the people. The people of India recognized the philanthropic attitude of the governments' heads and functionaries. Most of the newspapers of India viz., the *Benares Akhbar*, *Dabdaba-i-Sikandari*, *Lawrence Gazette*, *Sadarsha*, *Adib-i-Alam* and *Khair Khwah-i-Alam* etc expressed the approval over the work of the

government. In this perspective newspapers gave the reflection over some of the issues of public concerns. In the second half of the nineteenth century the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab and the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore won a great name among Musalmans. The reason for that was the return of shops by these government officials to the resident around the gold mosque at Lahore which was confiscated by the British Government when they took Punjab (IOR., Vernacular Newspapers Report, 1876, p.36). In this regard the services of Lord Northbrook, the viceroy of India were recognized when he abolished the income tax and during his term of office new rates of duties were fixed. He saved the lives of the people of Bengal from the famine and spent six and half crore of rupees for the welfare of the people and brought them out from their dilapidated condition. The *Benares Akhbar* noted the difference between Northbrook who worried bravely in famine for the lives of the public and that of Sir Cecil Beadon who allowed thousands of persons to perish and die during the famine in Orissa (IOR., 1876, pp.44-47).

### III. Thematic & Practical Response of Vernacular Press

The vernacular in its etymology has the meaning of local and indigenous. According to Merriam-Webster's, "vernacular" was brought into the English language as early as 1601 from Latin *vernaculus*, "native", which had been in figurative use in Classical Latin as "national" and "domestic", having originally been derived from *vernus* and *verna*, a male or female slave respectively born in the house rather than abroad (www.merriam-webster.com, 11-02-2010). In this article vernacular press is indicating the origin of local press of India which had developed its observation over the nature of British rule. The underlying section has dealt this issue in which the response of press has been exposed on the different aspects of Indians' life. British indeed introduced the flourishing patterns of life in the subcontinent but sometimes it lacked the attendant knowledge of the situation where it was executed. When they didn't care the regional dynamics essential for the effective administration, they will have to face the problems of political impasse which was manifested at the time of war of independence in 1857.

In the case of vernacular press, first periodical was started by Bolt in 1767 A.D and the aim of that periodical was commercial. Another newspaper—Bengal Gazette—was started by James Augustus Hicky from Calcutta on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1780 (www.indiondians.com, 27-05-2010). Both these Papers were under the control of East India Company. Sometimes press created a problem for the interests of the company for which it has to review its past policies in regard to liberty of the press, civil liberties and dissipation of news. Bengal Gazette in its critical venture diatribe the political and commercial policies of the East India Company. The result of this was that both these newspapers were banned and voice of the press was gagged. Lord Lytton imposed the restriction on the press in 1878 by the name of Vernacular Press Act which was similar to that of Lord Wellesley. Lord Wellesley laid down regulations of press in 1799; according to which press had to show and get approval of the government before the publication of any manuscript and proof sheet including advertisement (www.indiondians.com, 27-05-2010).

Another significant development happened in the history of the press when the first Bengal monthly 'Digdarshan' was started under the editorship of J.C. Mashman. From 1818 to 1839 Calcutta had 26 European newspapers and 9 Indian newspapers; Bombay had 10 European and 4 Indian journals; Madras had 9 European journals and it has become the essential part of the Indians' life (www.indiondians.com, 27-05-2010).

The objective of this vernacular press was not only to criticize the British policies but to disseminate the useful knowledge and information on problems of Indian interest with a view to educate and instruct them.

British people were mature in their sense of understanding the local patterns of authority and in most of the affairs of the public they showed less of their interest. They introduced some measures to reform the socio-political structure of society to bring it at the level of western standards of civilization. This was not in resonance with the local patterns of life and it created partly dis-adjustment of local mass with the apparatus of state. Vernacular press has covered this aspect candidly.

A resolution was passed in 1864 by Lawrence Government when municipal committees were constituted in the districts outside the presidency towns, 'it stated that ...holding the position we do in India, every view of duty and policy should induce us to leave as much as possible of the business of the country to be done by the people... and to confine ourselves to... influencing and directing in a general way all the movements of the social machine(Gazette of India,1864). British introduced the local institutions to impart the political training to the local people for managing their affairs but on the other hand local institutions worked as an agency to the magistracy. Apparently the political administration was more concerned to the welfare of the public but latently it was to maintain the authority of imperial rule contrary to the wishes of the people of the sub-continent.

This study is based on the review of vernacular press which had shed light on the rule of the British in the subcontinent. In this study the Indian office record related to vernacular newspapers reports had been examined. In one of record of Vernacular newspapers reported that up to 1873, published newspapers in number were 224, varied in language and place of origin. They were published on daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly and bi-monthly basis. Office of the governor general had been acquainted with the Indian perception by appointed some of the different officers who reported on the vernacular press to the government about their view point. There were some of the names of officers like Sohan Lal , P. Robinson , T.W Holderness, Priya Das who performed the duties as government reporter on vernacular press(Indian Office Record,pp.98-105).<sup>1</sup> These newspapers were published from different localities and in different languages. Some of the extracts had been given to analyze the perceptions of the press in regard to the rule of British in India.

### **Response of Press**

The newspaper reports better depicted the picture of English Administration directly related to law and order, dispensation of utilities and justice. The rule and its structure while working in the British India changed the tenor of life but at the same time it was natural to have the counter feelings of the people for whom the rule was devised. It parallel measured the response of the public which came to fore by one of pillar of state and society i.e., press.

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<sup>1</sup> Sohan Lal worked in the office of a government reporter on the vernacular press till 1873; P. Robinson as a government reporter on the vernacular press of upper India observed the news papers till May 28,1876; T.W Holderness viewed the press from June 1876 to July 1876; Priya Das viewed the press from July 1876 to December 1876, Indian Office Record, L/R/5/50, pp.98-105.

Some of the news papers have been mentioned to discuss the rule of the British in the sub-continent. British all the time stressed on the education, justice and well being of the people of the subcontinent but rendered this approach in a way which molested the local mind.

### **General Administration**

The general administration established in India after the conquest and annexation of different areas of India greased the functions of the company and later on the British government after the execution of their rule. When the forces of the company annexed the Punjab in 1849 under the leadership of Lord Dillhousie, nine regiments were raised for duty against the raids of tribe of highlanders. Within six months of conquest Lord Dillhousie disarmed the Punjab and 120,000 weapons of every variety of form and character were surrendered. The ancient institution of village watch, paid by the people and acting under local magnates was revived (Marshman,1893). This was the general attitude of the British which provided solace and succor to the masses but more of this was delivered in Eurocentric approach. Vernacular press highlighted the pros and cons of this attitude in the essentials of the locale.

One of the newspaper the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* of the 14th January 1870 remarked on the slothfulness and apathetic attitude of the people of the sub-continent in a very biased way that “Indians ought to bless government from the bottom of their hearts for the encouragement of learning receives from government, by which every just man can deal out justice; but the pity and sorrow is that we allow our idle whims and fancies to keep us from understanding what is intended for our good and if we do understand it, it is only to attribute interested motives to government and persuade ourselves that their object for advancing the system of education is to get good servants. This is [vary to] those who follow any trade or who are agriculturalists do not care to have their children taught, thinking that if they become learnt they will give up their own trade...the desire of the government is that the light of knowledge shall be spread and the darkness of the native hearts be enlightened like the light of the moon. The press reported that Hindoostanees have not profited ... by such favour as has been extended to them by government. Hindoostanees ought not to think of the meaning of the words progress and civilization only in their hearts but try to see them with their own eyes ... go to Europe [and see the] progress of knowledge and what a civilized nation is when in possession of the jewel of knowledge” (Vernacular Newspaper Reports,1870, pp. 27-28,40-41).

The *Alygurh Institute Gazette* of the 14th January 1870 extracted an article written by Munshi Syed Ghulam Hayder Khan, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Kairee, remarked that “how the British thought about the Indians: when a comparison is made between the habits, customs, worth& c., of Hindustanis and inhabitants of other countries, we are grieved to find Hindustanis below them in every respect; and, with the greatest amount of shame, we confess our own fitness: but when compare the people of Hindustan with the people of England, we feel disgrace and shame to the utmost because the people of that country, great and small, male and female, dumb and blind, are all adorned with that gem--knowledge; where as the people of this country possess such an amount of stupidity and bashfulness as quite precludes them from being weighed in the same scale...” (Vernacular Newspaper Reports,1870, p.27). The writer concluded by alluding to the circumstances attending the examination of a native of Hindustan in London, when

endeavoring to obtain admission into the civil service of India and exhorts the people of India to deal justly that this spy has disgraced his own unfortunate countrymen before others and to reflect whether the disgrace has not also disgraced the spy to our thinking it is shameful thing that the Hindustanis should be so disgraced and bring disgrace on their country without any advantage. The *Panjabi Akhbar* of the second march 1872 remarked over the discriminatory attitude of the government for delivering justice to the natives and the Europeans. It observed that 'allowing Europeans the exclusive privilege of having their cases tried only by the High Court...in spite of proclamation of Her Majesty's government that no distinction should be made between her subjects of whatever creed and colour... while the Europeans of even lower ranks are not cognizable by lower tribunals than the High Court (Vernacular Newspaper Reports, 1872, p.143).

It was observed in the press that undue partiality was shown to the Europeans and the promises set forth by her majesty were violated. There was discrimination and partiality on behalf of the general administration towards natives which was reportedly expressed by the press in the cases of criminal offences. *The Punjabi Akhbar* described about an event in which a European officer, who was a head of the police, with another Englishman, entered the shrine, and, despite the prayers and entreaties of the religious attendants, shot at the birds. In the course of the shooting, a pigeon was wounded and fell into the house of the guardian of the shrine. The attendants (sportsmen) went to the place but admittance into the house was refused. They forcibly made an entry and took away the game. The incident led to the registration of two cases in the Criminal Court, one on the part of the guardian, based on the charge of trespass, and the other on the part of the police officers against the guardian on the charge of the use of the abusive language. The magistrate in the first only fined the police officer Rs.5, while in the second, although the charge brought against the guardian was a trivial one, and such as could be lawfully justifiable as having been incurred for the preservation of his honour and property, sentenced the accused to one month's imprisonment, together with a fine of Rs.50 (Indian Office Record 1872, p.144).

Such kind of attitude was observed by *Arya Warta* of 20<sup>th</sup> October 1877. Paper stated that "when one of the parties in a dispute is also the judge of that dispute, it is sheer waste of time and labor for the other party to try to establish the truth of his claim. This is the case with India and its present rulers. There are often disputes between the government and the people; but the people cannot obtain impartial justice in such disputes, because the government is not only a party, but is also the judge. Cases of disputes between one ryot and another are decided by independent courts. But the cases in which government is interested are taken out of the jurisdiction of independent tribunals" (Dacosta,1878).

The British administrators sometimes felt the need of local informal panchayats to dispense the justice and the service of utility to the people. The Moonshee Amen Chund, Judicial Assistant Commissioner of Ajmer, on the question of suits arising from marriage contracts was in favour of the plan of appointing honorary *panchayats* in each town and village, which not only empowered to settle the marriage suits but also with the decision of other civil suits up to the value of Rs.25, as well as criminal suits punishable with fine up to Rs.5. this system was also recommended to the Punjab government by the Mr.Brandreth, Deputy Commissioner of Multan in his judicial report for 1870 (Indian Office Record, 1872, p.189).

On the social issues press was very vigilant. The news paper *Nasim-i-Jaunpore* published an article on the flattery in 1873. It mentioned that how evil of flattery and the *nizrana*(gift) became the perquisite of the peon and orderlies to let the people have access to the administrative machinery. The report of the news paper indicated that this kind of social malaise was being practiced under the administrative heads. Press reported an event of the emperor of China who was highly incensed at his commander in chief for addressing a flattery letter to him, as he looked upon such conduct as criminal. Paper proceeded to say, 'God grant that this may reach the ear of our government of Hindustan' (Indian Office Record, 1873, p.29).

On the issues of corruption and other social evils which had been festered into the administration, damaged the image of its self proclaimed an effective organisation. The *Alygurh Institute Gazette* of 24<sup>th</sup> January 1873 alluded to the remarks of a correspondent upon the opinion of Mr Reade, Assistant Magistrate of Furrukabad, concerning the *choonge*(toll) laws and the suppression of the bribery: correspondent found that few men can be found, who, for the sake of two piee, would knowingly do anything to injure their means of livelihood because the doors of bribery and corruption are ever open in most departments and authorities are weary of their efforts to suppress the evil...( Indian Office Record, 1873, pp.44-45).

The newspaper *Akhbar-i-Alam* drew the attention of the government of North West Provinces to the abuse of corruption which was connected with the registration of the deeds and documents conducted under the authority of *tehseeldars*. The *mohurrirs*(Head Clerk) instructed with the work of registration, collect an additional fee for themselves which was almost equal to the government fee; and in case of any refusing to meet the demand, the deed was returned back and pronouncing it to be doubtful, improperly written or on other fictitious pleas it was rejected. Paper stated that unless *mohurrirs'* fee had been paid, no deeds could be registered and the stamp papers on which they were written went wasted. *Tehsildars* willfully overlooked the grievance, while people did not dare to convey complaints thereof to the higher authorities on account of their inability to access to the officials...( Indian Office Record, 1873, pp.236-37).

The paper *Arunodaya*, 8<sup>th</sup> April 1877 depicted the feelings and opinions of the people regarding the administration in this way which could not be satisfactory for the claims of preferential treatment petered out to Indians. The paper stated that "the object of punishing criminals is to deter others from following their course; and, in order to obtain this object as fully as possible, the authorities must make every effort in their power to satisfy themselves that they punish criminals only, and not innocent persons. But we cannot say that the authorities under the English rule feel this anxiety. They care more to comply with the technicalities of the law and to get their handsome salaries, than to administer true justice. The consequence is that too often offenders escape and innocent persons are punished"(Dacosta,1878). The *Punjabi Akhbar* of 10<sup>th</sup> June 1876 referred to a case of Private McGrath who killed three native Indians on the ground of emotional high up on the event of 1857, was acquitted by the High Court, observed his insanity. As natives were themselves despicable on this event, so their lives were of no account (Indian Office Record, 1876, p.278).

The disregard was showed by the Europeans towards the natives and the treatment of the latter was mere beats. The feelings of discontent were being roused in the minds of the people in spite of knowing that the rule of the British was grateful for manifold and it was a valuable blessing. But they treated the natives as mere nobodies and forced them to cherish ill-feelings towards them. The newspaper Native Opinion of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1877 remarked over the one of the act of British administration which was not beneficial for the natives. Paper stated that:

*...our kind English Government has rendered salt nearly unprocurable by the poor Ryots(subjects), by imposing on it an excessively heavy duty, for which it is impossible to discover a parallel under the rules of the ignorant Mahomedan or Hindu Government (Dacosta, 1878).*

The *Aligarh Institute Gazette* of the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1876 also discussed the question of resentment among the natives in a way which is evaporating stern attitude of the rule. It stated that:

*...why natives are not nominated to juries in trial in which their own countrymen are concerned. Why they are not allowed to share their privilege in common with Europeans? Is it because they have not a fair complexion or is it government doubts their ability or honesty? If government is guided in its policy by the former considerations, the proclamation of her majesty, which recognizes no distinction of colour or creed and hold out equal privileges to her English and Indian subjects, is virtually annulled (Indian Office Record, 1876, p.402).*

The *Oudh Akhbar* of the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1877 expressed the concerns of general public over the levy of direct tax of license which was considered unjust. The paper stated that “ the people of Hindustan are already overburdened by a number of taxes, as the chaukadri, the road cess, the patwari, the school cess, talbana, stamps, the municipal tax, the customs, the harbour dues and the canal tax besides the revenue taken from the agricultural classes. If there be any deficit in the finances of the state, the government should curtail all extravagant expenditures. Paper questioned why are the revenues of this unlucky country carried to England? Why the treasurers of India are lavishly squandered? India had to pay millions sterling towards the expenses of the entertainment given to the late sultan of Turkey in England, and of the India visit of the prince of Wales devolved on the Indian exchequer. No less than ten lakh of rupees were spent on the late Delhi Durbar. An annual subsidy of twelve lakhs is paid to the Amir of Kabul. Paper expressed that it is really strange that an attempt is made at direct taxation in opposition to the public declarations of the English ministry that no direct tax would be levied in India”( Indian Office Record, Selection from the Vernacular Press, 1877, p.225).<sup>2</sup>

The *Almora Akhbar* of 15<sup>th</sup> august 1877 in reference to the vexed civil service question said that “in 1833 parliament and the court of directors declared that no inhabitant of India would be held disqualified to hold any office in the public service on the ground of his creed or colour, provided that he was otherwise qualified to hold it. Her

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<sup>2</sup> IOR, L/R/5/54, 1877,p.225; the stamp duty and process fee regulated by the Court Fee Act 1870 and rules already framed under the Peon’s Act xi of 1863. There was commission of five percent on sale of all property, IOR V/11/2780, Punjab Gazette, July 11, 1872, p.1466.

majesty also repeated the same pledges in her parliament of 1858, when the administration of India came under the direct management of the crown. It is to be regretted that in spite of these promises not a single native was admitted into the conventional civil service within the long period intervening between the years 1833-1853. In 1853 competition system was introduced for selective members for the civil service. One native succeeded in being appointed a member of the covenanted civil service in 1863 and since then only nine more natives had been appointed. Accordingly Lord Lytton confessed in his last convocation speech that pledges given to natives in the matter of high appointments were not adequately fulfilled. However Lord Salisbury aggravated the evil by lowering the limit of age for candidates to the civil service from 21 years to 19 years”(IOR, Vernacular Newspapers Report, 1877, p.573).

The *Dabir-i-Hind* of Allahabad, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1880 referred to a lecture delivered by Dr Hunter at Edinburgh in which he counted the benefits of British rule upon the natives of India: order has been introduced in the place of anarchy; the government by law has been introduced in the place of the government by sword; the strong cannot oppress the weak as was the case formerly; thousands of square miles of jungle have been cleared and brought under cultivation and fever smitten swamps covered with healthy cities; the native states which were formerly at war with each other, were now bound together by railways and telegraphs; the British rule has encouraged commerce and the spread of education and civilization among the natives. The press noted that “we are none the better for it. The government enacted good laws but officers do not act in accordance. The police openly oppress the natives. Daring thefts are committed everyday. The person who loses his property does not even report the theft to the police because the police enquiries only expose him to a great deal of unnecessary trouble and inconvenience, but never recovery of the lost property. Some thasildars abuse respectable persons in open court and realize more than the assessed revenue from zamindars. The people quietly bear all the tyranny and oppression of the officers. If any person foolishly complains of the oppression of any officer, he himself is convicted under section 211 of the Indian penal code and sentenced to imprisonment”( Indian Office Record, Vernacular Newspaper Reports, 1880, pp.25-27).

British rendered their services in the realm of education after the introduction of education policy by Lord Macaulay in 1835. The press has its own observation in the working of different institutions which were directly or indirectly involved in the dissemination of educational information. The education department was first started in 1854 and was originally under the orders of the judicial commissioner. In 1856 it was transferred to the financial commissioners. The first director of public instruction was appointed in the person of Mr. W.D. Arnold (Press list of Old Records, 1933).

The *Akhbar-i-Anjuman-i-Punjab* of 7<sup>th</sup> February 1873, criticized the order laid down by the director of public instruction, North Western Provinces. Paper stated that “office of the director of public instruction bonded all English teachers in the government schools in those provinces, drawing below Rs.100 who have not passed the L.A., or the entrance examination of the Calcutta University, to undergo an examination in November next; if they show incapacity, of being excluded from service in the educational department. It created anxiety in the provinces that many of the teachers cannot pay proper attention to their studies” (Indian Office Record, Native Newspaper Reports, 1873, pp.161-62).

The Koh-i-Noor of 31<sup>st</sup> May 1873 took exception to section 2 of G.G.O., Financial Department, No. 1445, dated 28<sup>th</sup> February 1873, according to which the lowest rate of postage on books is two annas. It was remarked that even the old rate of one anna for a packet not exceeding ten tola in weight was too high and had all along been a subject of complaint, and therefore the doubling of it is all the more open to objection. The price of large number of books—such as almanacs, journals—is often one or two annas per copy, so that in transmitting them by post a postage equal to or half of the price had to be paid under the old rule, which was felt very hard, and was a great obstacle in the way of the development of learning. The new rule will produce the worst effect and under it the cause of education will materially suffer (Indian Office Record, Native Newspaper Reports, 1873, pp. 374-75).

On the policy of religion British showed their neutrality in India which had clear communal divide. The *Punjabi Akhbar* commented on the situation and condemned the government for acting indirect contravention of its vaunted policy of non-interference in religious matters. The madras government at the instance of the inspector general of prison issued an order to the effect that prisoners whatever be their persuasion and creed, must be instructed in the Bible (Indian Office Record, Vernacular Newspaper Reports, 1876, p. 357).

The *Akhbar-i-Anjuman-i-Hind* of 1<sup>st</sup> March 1873 published a review by the Rajab Ali of Sir William Muir's Memorandum to the Supreme Court pleading in behalf of a permanent settlement for the North West Provinces. It was expressed that a permanent settlement was sure to prove beneficial alike to the people and the government, and that it was unjust that the north Western provinces should be debarred from a privilege enjoyed by the sister country Bengal. Paper gave the comparison of land revenue with that of English Government on the basis of cultivable land. In Akbar's time it was customary with *zamindars* (land holder and cultivator), which possessed 400 *beegahs* (half of an acre) of land, to cultivate 100 *beegahs* one year, and suffer the remainder to lie untilled, the government assessment being of course fixed only on the 100 *beegahs* cultivated. Next year the part cultivated in the year preceding was left untilled to recover its original vigour, and 100 *beegahs* out of the waste land were brought under cultivation and so on. By this plan the capabilities of the land were never weakened and it retained its original fecundity. Under the English Government it was quite otherwise. A tax was levied on all kinds of land and a waste lands were gradually brought under cultivation; they were treated as cultivated and rated accordingly. The *zaminadr* under the impression that they had to pay rent on the whole of the land in their possession, brought more and more of it under cultivation year after year, forgetting that by so doing the power of the land was continually weakened; hence the scarcity in the produce of the grain, and the growing increased in its price. The press commented that the more happy and prosperous the people are under a government, the more they are devoted to it, and ready to sacrifice their lives in its cause in times of difficulty (Indian Office Record, Native Newspaper Reports, 1873, pp. 161-63).

The *Punjabi Akhbar* of 27<sup>th</sup> September 1873 referred to the dealing of government with landed proprietors. Various kinds of cesses and assessment were levied which ultimately proved to be the cause of their ruin. For instance in case of the cultivators, though government was pleased to make advances in money to them, in order to enable

them to sink wells for irrigation purposes, it was lately laid down a rule by which a tax was to be paid on the water of the wells thus erected. Similarly the exactness of an interest on the arrears of the land revenue which remained unpaid on account of the *zamindar* being in distressed circumstances, the levying a tax on *zamindar* for grazing their cattle on fallow lands and the refusals to lower the government 'jumma' in cases in which the produce of land suffered from some unforeseen calamity were all improper and unjustifiable (Indian Office Record, 1873, p.597).

This was the general attitude of the British which had been visualized by the vernacular press not for criticism on the administration only but also for its improvement. It was a good aspect of the British that they let the press to evaluate their working in all spheres of life.

### **Conclusion:**

It is generally drawn from this observation that how far away the British in their ideals to fulfill in the environment of India which they had colonized. They saw their rule to be fairly and impartially carried out but while the party assailed was left to judge the honest of the assailer. It has been inferred from the expression of the vernacular press that Indian administrators have felt the difficulty of administration of India because of their incapacity of encompassing the whole life and ascertaining the facts of social condition and political sentiments. It was the valuable source of vernacular press which helped them to reach at facts and drawn their attention to rectify their acts if possible. It has been observed that the procedure and rules of business enunciated by Britishers endeavored to legitimate their rule over India. British devised divergent strategies to justify their authority in which some of the characteristics had been shared by the Britishers with the Indians while the other emphasized the presumed qualities of enduring difference. Over time however it was the differences of history, race, gender and society which embedded themselves most deeply in the British idea of India, and so became predominant that seemingly difficult to resolve in the context of British India. It was the turning point in the imperial history of India to which vernacular press reported exuberantly and heightened the concerns of Indian community about their future. Generally it led to those aspirations which ultimately caused to the independence of India.

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