



DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN NABHA STATE

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For a long time the Nabha State had no regular systems of education. In fact, education was not considered to be the concern of the State but that of the priestly class. There were Pathshalas of the Hindus and Madrasas of the Muslims. The work of imparting education in these institutions was mainly done by the priestly class, i.e. by the Brahmans in the Pathshalas and the Mullas or the Maulvis in the Madrasas. There were no fees levied in these institutions. The teachers received voluntary offerings in cash or in grain at each harvest from the villagers. The primary object of the education is to make the people better men and better citizens. A State that does not spend enough on education suffers in prosperity as well as in civilization.

In 1863 A.D. Raja Bharpur Singh attempted to modernise the education system in the Nabha State by established a school in Nabha with one teacher in English and another for Arabic and Persian¹. But it was in the time of Raja Hira Singh that some substantial progress was made in the development of education on modern lines in the State. Raja Hira Singh showed personal interest in the education of the State subjects. He appointed a new headmaster for the Nabha School and raised it to the middle standard in 1880 A.D. and further to the status of a high school in 1888 A.D. Its students first appeared in the Entrance Examination in 1890 A.D. In 1893 A.D. the Nabha High School was further raised to collegiate status, but in 1898 A.D. it was again reduced to a high school due to less funds².

The admission to the school was open to all castes on payment of prescribed fees. The school was run on secular pattern. New schools were opened at Bawal, Amloh, Dhaula, Dhanaula, Lohatbaddi and Bhadhar. Hira Singh took personal interest in the working of all these schools. He took keen interest to visit one school or the other without knowing anyone for the purpose of inspection of the students. Visits to the schools were not merely formal. He was accompanied English-knowing Ahalkars possessing experience in teaching, and through them had the students examined in the several subjects taught to them. Girl education was also not neglected. A girl's school at Phul was opened. The teachers of this school were directed to come to the zenana with the students and there they were examined by the Rani³.

In 1892 A.D. a teacher of Gurmukhi and Hindi was appointed to teach the girls there vernacular languages⁴. As the zamindars had generally remained illiterate, an attempt was also made to start native Gurmukhi schools in the villages for the education of the sons of Zamindars. Gurmukhi schools under a special Superintendent were established at Jalal, Jaito, Pakhu, Bhai Rupa and Jahlan in the Phul Nizamat. At Chotian, three miles from the town of Phul, a zamindari school was established in 1898 A.D.⁵ Into this school only the sons of agriculturists were admitted with the consent of Raja's. No fees were levied and the boys were lodged in a Boarding House connected to the school. This school ranked as an Anglo-Vernacular Middle School, but Gurmukhi was also taught in it.

In 1890 a separate Cantonment School at Nabha was opened in which English, Gurmukhi, Persian and other subjects were taught. Its students were provided boarding, clothes and books from the State⁶. The educational expenditure of the State was borne mainly by the zamindar class, because the State levied school cess along with the land revenue⁷. Fees were only levied from non-agriculturists, the sons of cultivators being exempt. Two percent was deducted from the pay of every civil servant of the State. If one son of a civil servant attended the school no fees were charged, but if two sons attended the school, the second son had to pay half of the prescribed fees⁸.

Raja Hira Singh made arrangements for the payment of salaries to the teachers in the same way as the teachers were paid in British India, Like British pattern again, the Raja also made provisions for pensions of the teachers from 1891 A.D. onwards⁹.

Raja Hira Singh also spent State funds for the cause of education outside the State. Since there were no arrangements for medical and engineering education in the State, the Raja used to send students to the Thompson Engineering College, Roorki and to the Medical College, Lahore at the State expense. Special attention was paid to the higher education of the sons of zamindars. They were sent to the Camp School, Lahore at the cost of the State for higher studies in Persian and English. It has been noted in the diary of 9 July 1873 that a scholarship of rupees 50 per month was granted to a student who was studying at Amritsar¹⁰. With the liberal donation given by Hira Sing, the Khalsa Printing Press was started at Lahore¹¹. The Raja of Nabha, along with the Princes of Patiala and Jind, also gave handsome donations amounting to rupees 75,000 to the Khalsa College, Amritsar, when it was set up in 1892 A.D. Besides, the officials and subjects of the Nabha State also made a gift of Rs.30,000 to the College. The arrangement at that time was that the capital sum was to remain deposited with the State Bank, the interest thereon being payable to the College month by month to meet the routine charges of the institution¹². On 12 April 1904 further donations of Rs.1,00,000 from the Darbar,

rupees 50,000 from the Tikka Sahib and rupees 65,450 from the officials and State subjects, were made to the College¹³. The sum was again deposited in the bank and the accruing interest began to be utilised to meet the expenses of the College¹⁴.

At the prize distribution function at the Foreman Christian College, Lahore (April, 1882) over which the Lieutenant-Governor presided, Raja Hira Singh made a donation of Rs.2,000. On his visit to the Aitchison College, Lahore he gave away Rs.1,100 for the Institution, Rs.1,000 for the students and Rs.100 to the carpenter engaged in work over there¹⁵.

Raja Hira Singh tried to follow the system prevalent in British India in the Nabha State in his own humble way. But the progress in education cannot be said to be very satisfactory. Due to insufficient funds much progress in the growth of education could not be accomplished in the State. It has already been noted that Nabha High School, which was raised to the Collegiate status in 1893, was again reduced to a High School in 1898. The Nabha Darbar had to spend a greater part of its revenues to meet the expenses of other departments of administration, as also upon maintaining Imperial Service Troops, so that little funds could be spared for the development of education in the State.

After Raja Hira Singh the work was continued by his son and successor, Ripudaman Singh. He was even more enthusiastic than his predecessors for promoting the cause of education in the State. He was shocked when he came to know that there were only 7,000 literate people in his State. He, therefore, resolved to put in vigorous efforts to spread education. In 1913 on the occasion of Dusshera he abolished the fees in primary schools¹⁶. The Nabha State was one of the leading Native States of the Punjab region to introduce free primary education, the other State being Patiala which did the same in 1911¹⁷.

The Nabha Chief wished that the education upto Entrance Examination should be given free of cost but the financial difficulty did not allow this¹⁸. Nevertheless, substantial progress in education was tangible during this period. When he assumed the charge of Chiefship there were 12 schools¹⁹. By 1917 the number rose to 15 schools for boys and two for girls²⁰. The 15 schools were: High School at Nabha=1, Anglo-Vernacular Upper Middle schools=4, Anglo-Vernacular Lower Middle schools=3, Vernacular Middle school-1, Primary schools-6. In honour of late Maharaja Hira Singh, a special fund was collected and 'Hira Singh Trust' was created. The interest on the amount was utilised for sending brilliant boys to England for higher education. The first who was sent was Dr. Manmath Nath Mitra who on return joined as Health Officer, Allahabad and Lucknow. Like Hira Singh, Ripudaman Singh also spent money for education outside the State. The Maharaja gave a donation of rupees two lakhs to Madan Mohan Malviya when he made an appeal for the funds to start Banaras Hindu University²¹. It was stipulated then that the Nabha State would be at liberty to depute a student every year for studies in that University.

In 1923 Ogilvie, who officiated as Administrator of the State for some time, thoroughly examined the existing system of education of the State and submitted a report dwelling upon the weaknesses and shortcomings of education. He observed that Education Department was one of the most neglected departments of the State²² and this fact explained the backward condition of the people of the State. There were only 17 schools (15 for boys and 2 for girls) and the staff of the schools consisted of only 42 teachers. The teachers were poorly qualified and ill-paid because of the limited finances. In accordance with his recommendations, steps were taken to reorganise the education department, and for this purpose a Director of Education was appointed²³. Under the instructions of the Director of Education new schools were opened and efficient teachers were appointed. The sum spent on education, which amounted to rupees 22,217 in 1920, rose to rupees 32,923 in 1925.

During the minority of Maharaja Partap Singh (1928-41) the progress on the educational side had been gradual but not unsatisfactory. Many new schools were opened both for boys and girls and the standard of existing schools was raised considerably. Over rupees 1,00,000 were spent by the State authorities in repairing old school buildings and in constructing new ones. New Girls' schools were opened at Nabha, Dhanaula and Bawal. The two lower Middle schools at Mandi Phul and Mandi Jaito were raised to the standard of Anglo-Vernacular Middle schools and two primary schools were converted to Lower Middle schools permanently by the Council of Regency with the approval of the Agent to the Governor-General. Primary schools at Ateli and Bhai Rupa were raised to the Lower Middle Standard while 10 new Primary schools were started at different rural areas of the State. The Anglo-Vernacular Middle School, Dhanaula, which was located in a public sarai, was provided with a new building. Similarly the Nobles State Girls School was also provided with new building with residential quarters of the Headmistress and menial staff to be constructed in the old Mahikhana ground²⁴. As in British India, a system of grants-in-aid was introduced in the State to encourage and aid private enterprise in the cause of education²⁵. Following that pattern, the Council of Regency also started giving aids to the schools run by private agencies. The private schools depended much upon the munificence of the public or on the income derived from school fees. Such private schools were established at Chaswal, Mangewal, Ateli, Begpur, Bhullerheri, Tanda Badda, Jallha and Nachhrai. Similarly there were girls schools at Mandi Phul, Mandi Jaito and Mandi Gobindgarh. The important schools which received monthly State aid between rupees twenty-five to rupees thirty-five were Sat Narain Middle School for boys at Mandi Gobindgarh, Suria Ashram

Vidayala for boys at Kanti, Kanya Pathshala for Girls at Mandi Phul and Kanya Pathshala for Girls at Mandi Jaito²⁶.

The other notable measure connected with the period of the Council of Regency was that the State High School, Mandi Phul, was recognised by the Panjab University permanently while the Arya High School, Nabha, and the Public High School, Jaito, were also recognised provisionally for two years²⁷. Moreover, Nabha was declared by the Panjab University as a centre for students appearing in the Matriculation Examination. As a result of this, the state candidates for the examination was saved a lot of expense and worry involved in going over to different University centres outside the State²⁸. Due to all these reforms the number of scholars which was 1636 in 1925 rose to 4879 in 1938-39²⁹.

Attention was also paid towards adult education and technical education. Two adult schools were started at Sulkha and Amlloh³⁰. But later on under Maharaja Pratap Singh 50 adult education centres were opened to eradicate illiteracy among the masses³¹. In order to give training to the students in the art of weaving, a primary school was opened at village Chaswal on the initiative of Mr. Harbans Lal³².

Attention was also given to Female education. In 1934 there was one Anglo-Vernacular Middle School for Girls at Nabha and one Primary School for Girls at Dhanaula. For girls three new Primary Schools were opened at the headquarters of the three districts during 1936 and the number of State girls schools was increased to five³³. The Nabha State Girls School was opened in November 1938 which was provided with laundry, kitchens, playgrounds, library, etc. It gave an impetus to female education which was an essential preliminary to any scheme for the achievement of universal literacy³⁴.

In order to encourage promising students of the State to acquire college education, the Nabha Darbar granted three scholarships, two of rupees 30 per month and one of rupees 20 per months, to the deserving scholars of the State who prosecuted their studies in different colleges. Twenty chotian stipends, which varied in value from rupees four to from rupees eight per month, were awarded to the best students coming from the agriculturist classes who were reading in High and Middle classes of the State schools³⁵. Besides be chotian scholarships, the Darbar also granted other scholarships to encourage college education. For female education one scholarship of rupees twenty per month was granted to a girl student of the State³⁶.

Fee concession was given to the poor and deserving students. In 1930 the proportion of students who were exempted from the payment of fees was raised from ten percent to fifteen percent³⁷. Concessions to students studying in various schools were made for travelling for a specified purpose by North-Western Railways³⁸. The State also spent money for the advancement of education outside the State and also to encourage studies in Gurmukhi language and Sikh history³⁹.

The educational expenditure was met from school fees, fines, education cess and contribution from various Mandis. Education cess was also deducted from the salaries of all the State Officers drawing salaries of over rupees twenty-five per month⁴⁰. Due to the expansion and development of education the total expenditure which was rupees 10,000 in 1903-04, became rupees 22,217 in 1920 and rupees 32,923 in 1925; it further rose to rupees 91,287 in 1938-39, i.e., during the period of Council of Regency⁴¹. The State spent large sums of money annually on providing uniforms and other equipments to poor boys, and this was regarded as a fine form of investment since the scout movement unflinchingly helped in building the character of young generation⁴².

Maharaja Pratap Singh, like his predecessors, made an important contribution in the development of education in this State after 1941. The most remarkable achievement connected with the name of Maharaja Pratap Singh in the domain of education was the inauguration of a degree College at Nabha in 1946⁴³. To perpetuate the sacred ceremony of his late father, Ripudaman Singh, it was named after him. The College started functioning in June 1946. The College from its very inception fulfilled its objects in providing facilities of higher education at home. It was a co-educational institution. Out of 170 students, 20 were girls. The students took active part in the extra mural activities of the college such as sports and debates etc. The College was housed in one of the wings of the State High School, Nabha. A sum of rupees 20,000 was spent on the school building to make it fit in accordance with needs of the College⁴⁴. This institution was affiliated to the Panjab University and imparted education in Science, both for medical and non-medical groups, and arts to the Intermediate and Degree classes.

The College imparted education in the following subjects:

- ✓ Intermediate Arts: English, Mathematics, Persian, Sanskrit, Economics, History, Geography, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi (optional and compulsory).
- ✓ Intermediate Science: Medical and Non-Medical: English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi (optional).
- ✓ Degree classes: English, Mathematics A Course, Mathematics B Course, Economics, History, Geography, Sanskrit, Persian, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu (optional). Honours classes were held in English, Mathematics and Economics.

To encourage public speaking and high thinking, sound educational societies such as 'The College Debating Club', 'Geographical Society', 'The College Dramatic Club', 'The Economic Society' and 'The College

Union' were established in the College under the guidance of the Professors. The students were encouraged to take part in these societies for developing their power of expression⁴⁵.

Library facilities were provided for the students. The College library was furnished with up-to-date books at a cost of rupees 10,000. It contained books dealing with all the important and modern subjects⁴⁶. The College was also provided with a Hostel temporarily located in the upper gallery of the college hall which was converted into rooms for Boarders.

Compulsory physical training was introduced and facilities in all the popular games were provided. The College teams participated several times in the Inter-College matches and tournaments.

During this period the number of schools which was 40 in 1941 rose 75 in 1946 and 95 in 1947⁴⁷. No alterations were, however made in the existing educational buildings due to the non-availability of building materials⁴⁸. The Maharaja along with Chief Minister and other ministers used to pay surprise visits to various schools, and kept himself in touch with the actual conditions of various institutions⁴⁹.

Free education continues to be given in all the girl's schools and to the boys upto primary classes⁵⁰. A Central Public Library was started by the Maharaja in February 1947. This institution was house in Kothi Angurawali in the Qila Mubarak. A trained librarian, Bahadur Singh, who got his training for three months in the Punjab Public Library, Lahore, was appointed to look after the library⁵¹. 1183 books in English, 821 in Urdu and 396 in Punjabi and 484 in Hindi on various subjects were purchased for the library. 9 dailies, 3 weeklies, one fortnightly, 16 monthlies and 2 quarterlies were also subscribed for the library.

Special efforts were made to educate the people of rural areas and new primary schools were opened in different villages at the State expense. In the rural areas many middle schools were raised to High School standard, 3 Lower middle school to Middle standard and 3 Primary Schools to Lower Middle standard⁵². It has been estimated that the State spent about 33% of its total income on the education of rural population.

With a view to give vocational base to education, technical classes in metal work, carpentry and weaving were opened at Amlah, Dhanaula and Bawal high schools. Science classes were also opened during 1947 and Dhanaula, Mandi Phul, Jaito, Boys High School and Girls High School at Nabha⁵³. The number of scholars in the State increased from 4,879 in 1938-39 to 11,068 in 1946-47. To expand the Educational Department the posts of Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and 3 District Inspectors of schools were created; the post of Inspector of schools was abolished⁵⁴. Bhagwan Das was the Superintendent of Education Department in 1946-47.

The last Maharaja of the State made every possible effort for the spread of education. According to the plan of five years Post-War reconstruction, it was proposed to open 60 more Primary Schools and 20 more Middle Schools for boys and girls in the villages with a view to enable all children between the age of six and twelve to learn three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). Provisions was also made to open Adult schools to enable those illiterate persons to educate themselves who had passed the age of regular schooling⁵⁵. Improvement was to be made in the existing primary, middle and high schools and scholarships for higher studies in India and abroad were to be granted liberally. The scheme was to extend in the districts of Phul, Amlah and Bawal⁵⁶. Under this expansion scheme rupees 11,07,498 were earmarked for the expenditure on education for five years. This scheme, however, could not be carried out for five years successfully as the Nabha State merged into Pepsu in 1948.

The foregoing account leads to the conclusion that the progress in education on modern lines in the State was really started during the period of Raja Hira Singh. Raja Hira Singh believed that without good citizens the administrative machinery could not be run effectively and efficiently, and without good education it was impossible to get good citizens. Thus due to his personal interest the education began to make remarkable strides. Moreover, the period from 1854 to 1905 was a period of tremendous growth of modern education in British India. The Nabha State was greatly influenced by strides in education in the contemporary British Punjab. After Hira Singh the work of expansion was continued by his son and successor, Ripudaman Singh, who made primary education free in the State. He also supported the cause of education outside the State. But the progress remained far from satisfactory as the resources of the State were limited. The unsatisfactory condition of education was even noticed by the British Administrator. Remarkable progress in education was made under the Council of Regency (during the period of Maharaja Pratap Singh's minority) which worked under the guidance of the British Resident. Most of the measures for the development of education were taken on the Punjab model. Private indigenous Institutions were given grants-in-aid so that there might be enough facilities for the masses to receive education. Special efforts for were made to educate the people of rural areas and new Primary Schools were opened in different villages at the State expense. New girl schools were opened at Nabha, Dhanaula and Bawal. Due attention was paid to the spread of Boy Scout Movement. Provisions were also made for the training of the teachers at State expense. The education continued to make rapid progress during Maharaja Pratap Singh's regime. He opened a Degree College and westernized the education to such a result of all these efforts Nabha became the leading Princely State of the Punjab region so far as literacy of the people was concerned. It attained the literacy rate of 4.7% while in Patiala it was 4.1%, and in Jind it was 2.4%. The literacy rate of Nabha was even higher than that of the British Punjab⁵⁷.

Conclusion:

Education was developed in the State on modern lines. Following by and large the pattern of the British Punjab, the State authorities gradually set up a large number of primary and high schools. Private indigenous institutions were encouraged and given grants-in-aid. Special efforts were made to educate the people of rural areas. A number of female schools were also opened at various places. Arrangements were made for the training of teachers at State expense. Due attention was paid to the spread of Boy Scout Movement. Nabha was made one of centres for Matriculation Examination conducted by the Punjab University. A Degree College was started in this capital city in 1946, and by 1947 the number of schools in the State rose to 95. It has been calculated that the literacy rate in the Nabha State was higher than that in the Patiala and Jind States and even than that in the British Punjab.

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