Working Paper No. 110

Patriarchy and class:
An approach to a study of women's education in Madras Presidency

by

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August 1992

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Introduction

The drive for a rapid development in the education of women came largely from a perception summed up aptly in the following statement by Mayhew: "women's education is the condition on which ultimately the success of male education depends - the fundamental basis of any real and permanent regeneration of Indian National Life".[1] Following Kelly,[2] this paper attempts at studying women's education by "putting women at the centre of research" in an effort to bring out the manifest presence of patriarchal attitudes in the processes by which schools, through their location, curriculum and structure, produced the kinds of asymmetrical outcomes that research on women's studies have thus far documented.

Chanana has highlighted the differential spread of women's education in India particularly in the early 20th century - both interregional and intraregional - and argues among other things that these variations are embedded in a socio-cultural milieu.[3] We take off from the overview provided by Chanana and hope to initiate an indepth study of women's education in the Madras Presidency with particular reference to the beginnings of higher education for women. The emphasis will be on the policies formulated to further formal education for women and the debates that these policies (or the lack of them) generated in the Presidency. It is our contention that the complex issues

surrounding the educational process including women's access to education, and educational outcomes are so steeped in the gender-linked social relationships through which women are defined, that a "cultural constraint" theory forms only part of the explanation.

Theoretical Framework : An Outline:

Placing women at the centre of research on education is imperative to address fundamental questions such as why women go to school (or fail to go), how education affects institutions that women do not control and which, in most instances, oppress women. Official approach to women's education in the third world is premised on either denial or unquestioning acceptance of patriarchy. Instead the problem is posed as one of "access" to education assuming in the process that schools are neutral institutions that make no distinction between males and females. Solutions therefore consist in advocating the setting up of more schools, more trained school teachers, 'relevant' curricula etc., without addressing the realities of women's lives which is that women's participation in activities outside the domestic sphere is profoundly affected by marriage, childbearing and childrearing and in ways very different from men's.[4]

An approach to a study of women's education by unravelling its patriarchal content will, in our opinion, go a long way in explaining why expansion in schooling facilities, in curriculum (to include scientific knowledge and technical skills), in teachers' training, cannot fully account for the persistence of

inequalities in educational opportunities between men and women. The dominant approach (as far as social science methodology is concerned) stresses the significance of the changes in gender relations with the rise of capitalism. Feminist scholarship has however put paid to such claims by documenting the subordinate status of women in the already industrialized nations of Western Europe and North America; neither are critics of the capitalist system able to explain why sexual divisions/differences in education persist in socialist systems inspite of the abolition of private ownership of the means of production. Patriarchy, thus has to be identified as distinct from capitalism and "sometimes antagonistic to it" [5] in order to document the process through which relations of male domination are reproduced within education.

Following Walby we define patriarchy as a system of social structures and practice in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. "The use of the term social structure is important here, since it clearly implies rejection both of biological determinism, and, the notion that every individual man is in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate position". [6] An historical account of women's education in the Indian context has also to contend with the phenomenon of colonialism. Among the characteristics that Kelly and Altbach isolate as essential to a colonial relationship, and especially to the colonial educational process, (which we find relevant to our discussion), are the following: [7]

(1) the colonized group is assumed to be intellectually, morally and physically inferior;

(2) the colonial educational system is controlled by the dominant group and is detached from the culture of the colonized and colonizer as well;

(3) the history of the colonized is either denied or reinterpreted in such a fashion that colonial education constitutes a fundamental assault on the identity of the colonized group;

(4) the substance of the colonial education is different from that given the colonizer;

(5) a plausible outcome of the colonial situation is that the colonized began to identify with their opppressor, to assume the superiority of his values and knowledge, to see themselves as weak and ignorant, and finally to depend on the colonizer, for a definition of the situation, `protection' and other resources."

A gendered account of the colonial education process (which is what we have attempted in the pages that follow) demonstrates that the characteristics listed above by Kelly and Altbach did not always have the same impact on male and female education. Patriarchal attitudes that formed the basis for the education policy in Britain were imported into India and found expression in various official/unofficial pronouncements. More important, in course of time, educated Indian men in their official capacity endorsed and adapted these same pronouncements while concretising policies relating to women's education. It follows therefore, that, as in the case of capitalism, `patriarchy has to be differentiated from colonialism and treated as a distinct analytical category. It also follows that `patriarchy' is not a historical constant. Changes in the manifestations of patriarchy over time can be studied through changes in the degrees and forms of patriarchy. Degrees of patriarchy refers

to the intensity of oppression on a specified dimension - for instance, the differential service conditions imposed on women teachers, and the size of the wages gap between men and women teachers. Forms of patriarchy refers to the overall type of patriarchy as defined by the specific relations between different patriarchal structures. For instance, private and public are two forms of patriarchy: "They differ on a variety of levels; firstly, in terms of the relations between the structures, and, secondly, in the institutional form of each structure. Further, they are differentiated by the main form of patriarchal strategy exclusionary in private patriarchy and segregationist in public patriarchy."[9] The expansion of women's education has brought women into the public sphere but not on equal terms. They are subordinated within the public sphere through, say, the 'inferior' quality of the education imparted to them, the emphasis on a particular kind of 'socialisation'[10] message included in the courses taught to them. The increase in the number of girls attending schools led to an increase in the demand for women teachers. However, the opening up of teaching as a profession for women indicated a "shift from an exclusionary strategy to a segregationist one since it meant a movement from attempting to exclude women from paid work to accepting their presence but confining them to jobs which were segregated from and graded lower than those of men."[11] In summary, therefore, while access to hitherto barred public spheres in society may appear to constitute a reduction in the degree of patriarchy, each such access has, simultaneously provoked a change in the

form of patriarchy.

It is important to introduce a caveat at this juncture. Our paper deals with `education' as conceived at the official level. The debates/discussions on various aspects of education and the educational process that took place at various levels (among women's groups, members of different communities, different political parties) do not find a place in this paper. This 'official education' however became, as Krishna Kumar points out, "a programme to train a small minority of property holders in the attitudes and skills of colonial rulers. ---Education enabled one to place oneself above the masses, intellectually and morally, and see oneself as a legitimate candidate for a share in the colonial state's power and the privileges that went with it. -- None of the skills, crafts, arts and knowledge that the illiterate masses possessed could impress the educated Indian, including teachers, as being worth learning. These forms of culture became symbols of ignorance and decadence and, as such, became irrelevant to education."[12]

For convenience of analysis the rest of the paper is divided into four sections: Section I provides some idea of the efforts made by the Madras Government to give an impetus to the development of women's education. This part of our discussion is based largely on a survey that was undertaken in the Madras Presidency (on the recommendation of a Conference of the Gazetted Women Officers of the Education Department held in August 1927 on the position of women's education) the results of which were embodied in a report published in 1929.[13] This section

essentially highlights the manner in which the colonial government tackled the "accessibility" question - drawing girls from the private to the public sphere. Apart from indicating the differential accessibility levels between boys and girls, it also brings out the differential impact the Government's efforts had on the various communities with particular reference to the girls within these communities.

Section II deals with two aspects: the training of teachers and the entry of women into the educational field in an administrative capacity. The deliberations surrounding these issues bring out clearly what in feminist terminology has come to be termed as the feminization of the teaching profession, particularly at lower levels. More important this section concretely highlights what we had outlined earlier, namely, the fact that the movement from the private to the public sphere really meant a movement from an exclusionary to a segregationist strategy. While Section I points to the change in the form of patriarchy from private to public, Section II highlights the degree and therefore the intensity of patriarchy.

The debates/discussions centering around government involvement in promoting higher education for women and the issue of what should constitute the "appropriate" content of courses for females to pursue, forms the subject matter of Section III Here the question is not merely one of colonialism and patriarchy but also that of class, with express emphasis being laid on promoting a curriculum suited to middle-class interests.

In Section IV we bring together various issues thrown up by our paper and also outline the future course of our study on this subject.

I

An Overview British India

In 1915 a memorial on the subject of the education of girls in India was presented to the Secretary of State for India. The memorial emphasized points which had long caused anxiety to the Government of India - the insignificant number of girls under instruction, the disparity in this respect of the condition of the male and female portions of the population, and, "the consequent danger to the social well-being of the Indian community",[14] (emphasis added.)

One cannot however dismiss the progress made in girls education since 1882 (when the Indian Education Commission came out with its Report)[15] as negligible. The total number of girls at school in British India at the time of the Education Commission was 1,27,000. In 1915-16 it was 11,86,000 and in 1917-18 it was 12,64,000. In 1882 again the proportion of boys to girls under instruction was 1:20. In 1917-18 it was 1:5.3. However, turning to figures indicating girls at different grades of education it was found that more than 9/10 ths of the girls under instruction were in the primary stage while something less than 2 per cent were in the secondary stage. As far as collegiate education was concerned the number of girls studying in Arts colleges in 1917-18 was 914. The Calcutta University Commission[16] in its Report had declared that the intermediate classes did not properly form a part of collegiate or university education. If this proposition was accepted then the number of

girls who were doing real university work was infinitesimal. In the three colleges in Calcutta the Commission found that there were only 543 students attempting such work. The Government of India, however, were 'impressed' with the success of the two
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women's colleges in Madras.

Madras Presidency

It must be emphasized at the outset that literacy as such among the total population of the Presidency was very poor and this was repeatedly brought to the notice of the government (see graph appended to the text). But compared to other provinces in British India, the achievement of the Madras Government in the field of girls' education was way ahead and was even commended in
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the Report of the Progress of Education in India, 1927-32. Statistics relating to (a) enrolment of girls in all institutions, (b) expenditure by the Government on girls' education, (c) the proportion of trained to untrained teachers, (d) the enrolment in co-educational institutions, and (e) the number of government-run institutions, point to a clear lead by Madras on all counts. However, data also reveal that, inspite of highest enrolment, the rate of retention at the primary level was
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very low in the Madras Presidency. Further, the most prominent and disquieting feature in the development of education was the great disparity that existed between boys and girls and the rapid increase in this disparity during the quinquennium 1922-1927 just
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before the survey was undertaken. Table 1 gives details of this disparity.

Table 1

Disparity in Education : Sex-wise				
	1912	1917	1922	1927
Percentage of males at school	5.1	6.5	7.0	9.5
Percentage of females at school	1.0	1.5	1.8	2.5
Disparity	4.1	5.0	5.2	7.0

Source : Education, G.O.No.578, March 23, 1929.

The increase in disparity between 1912 and 1917 was 0.9, between 1917 and 1922 it was 0.2, but between 1922 and 1927 it was 1.8, practically double that of he two preceding quinquenniums. By the government's own admission the marked increase in disparity between 1922 and 1927 was due to a special effort which was made during the period to accelerate the extension of elementary education among boys by opening an elementary school for boys in each schoolless centre with a population of 500 or above, with the aid of provincial subsidy; while, for girls, contrary to the policy in the preceding quinquennium ending 31st March 1922, no provincial subsidies were granted for opening new elementary schools. Further, by handing over the then existing government elementary schools for girls in 1922 to the control of local bodies, no provincial funds were expended on developing these schools and the expansion of elementary education was thus left entirely to the initiative of local bodies and aided agencies.

The disparity between the stages of development in girls and boys education in the various grades of education can be seen from Table 2.

Table 2

Sex-wise Disparity in the various grades of Education

	Pupils in Arts Colleges			Pupils in Secondary Schools			Pupils in Elementary Schools		
	Men	Women	Proportion of men to women	Boys	Girls	Proportion of Boys to girls	Boys	Girls	Proportion of Boys to girls
1926-27	11,770	488	24:1	164776	19896	8:1	1714501	501206	3:1
1921-22	7,843	384	20:1	133466	16471	9:1	1199300	347285	3:1
1916-17	7,540	184	41:1	138260	11632	12:1	1071636	293185	4:1
1911-12	4,893	46	106:1	101890	8446	12:1	829331	199719	4:1

Source: Education, G.O. No.578, 23rd March 1929.

Data pertaining to sex-wise distribution of population attending school in each district in the Presidency revealed that (i) in general, the districts which were the most advanced in boys' education were also the most advanced in girls' education, that those which were backward in the one were also backward in the other, and that, on the whole, the disparity between the two types of education was greatest in the more advanced areas and less in the more backward;

(ii) that the order of advancement of the four leading districts was the same for boys and girls, but the disparity between boys and girls' education was greater in the two most advanced than in the other districts of the Presidency.

Disparity in facilities provided and therefore access to education for the two sexes showed clearly in the figures provided by the government. In Madras city, for instance, where disparity in elementary education was comparatively small and girls' education was well advanced, there was one elementary school for every 139 boys of school age while there was only one elementary school for every 423 girls of school age. The authorities acknowledged that during the quinquennium ending 1921-22 attention was concentrated on the development of boys' education, which in the more advanced and receptive areas did have a positive effect on public opinion. While the need for a similar concentration on girls' education was considered necessary (but never materialized) it was also realized that the complete withdrawal of government from responsibility in the matter of elementary education for girls was not desirable and that the contribution of provincial subsidy towards the provision and development of elementary schools for girls should have formed an integral part of a sound educational policy.[23]

Again it was stressed that if progress was to be achieved in the dispersion of education no scheme for the introduction of compulsory education into any area was to be approved unless it provided for the introduction of compulsion for boys and girls simultaneously; further it was pointed out that while compulsion would take a longer time to be really effective in the case of girls, nevertheless, the result of omitting them altogether would mean complete cessation of development, or, at least a retardation in the development of girls' education in the area

nto which compulsion for boys alone was introduced.

An examination of the figures showing the percentage of male and female population under instruction in the various communities showed clearly the exceptional backwardness of Hindu girls in relation both to Hindu boys and to girls of other communities, and also the relatively satisfactory position of Muslim girls when compared to Muslim boys.[24] The percentage of the male Christian population at school was nearly double the percentage of the female Christian population at school; it was exactly double in the case of Muslims but in the case of Hindus it was four times as great.(Table 3)

Table 3

Population under Instruction : Community-wise and Sex-wise

Community	Census Figures of 1921: Male population	Census Figures of 1921: Female population	Figures for 31st March 1927 from the quinquennial report for 1922-27: Males at school	Females at school	% of male population at school	% of female population at school
Europeans including Anglo-Indians	674047	687437	121700	72443	18	10
Hindus	18777933	19311477	1550778	388520	8	2
Muslims	1404000	1436488	86727	54781	6	4
Others	14769	12834	34318	6554	11	2
Total	20870749	21448236	1793523	522298		

Source: Education, G.O. No.578, 23rd March 1929.

Table 4 illustrates the ratio of boys to girls in each grade of institution for the various communities.

Table 4

Proportion of Scholars (Sex-wise and Community-wise) under instruction in Public Institutions in the several grades on 31st March 1927, (the agency schools being omitted)

Community	Boys	Girls	Proportion of boys to girls
University			
European (including Anglo-Indians)	49	74	7:1
Indian Christian	1150	289	4:1
Brahman	8054	87	92:1
Non-Brahmans	4473	130	34:1
Depressed classes	45	2	22:1
Muhammadans	462	4	115:1
Others	13	2	6:1
Total	11426	588	24:1
Secondary:			
European(including Anglo-Indians)	3911	3873	1:1
Indian Christian	15192	7586	2:1
Brahman	51775	2466	21:1
Non-Brahman	81079	5133	16:1
Depressed classes	2395	252	9:1
Muhammadan	9656	335	29:1
Others	768	251	3:1
Total	164776	19896	8:1
Elementary:			
European (including Anglo-Indian)	865	875	1:1
Indian Christian	100533	59736	1.6:1
Brahman	80871	55849	1.5:1
Non-Brahman	1135457	286159	4:1
Depressed classes	186629	38244	5:1
Muhammadan	176609	54442	5:1
Others	33537	5903	6:1
Total	1711501	501206	3:1
University + Secondary + Elementary			
European (including Anglo-Indian)	4825	4822	5:5
Indian Christian	1021675	67611	5:3.5
Brahman	140700	58402	5:2
Non-Brahman	1221009	291442	5:1 2/7
Depressed Classes	189069	38498	5:1
Muhammadans	86727	54781	5:2.5

Source: Education, G.O. No.578, 23rd March 1929.

In the European and Anglo-Indian community the total number of boys undergoing University education were two-thirds of the girls but in the secondary and elementary stages the number of boy and girl pupils at schools were approximately the same.

In the Indian Christian community the ratio of boys to girls gradually increased in the higher stages of education but showed less disparity at practically every stage than in any other section of the community.

Among Brahman girls who were relatively more backward compared to Brahman boys than Muslim girls were to Muslim boys, 97 per cent were to be found in elementary schools. Among non-Brahman girls the proportion of boys to girls reading in secondary schools and universities was still lower although the education of non-Brahman girls as a whole was much farther behind that of non-Brahman boys than was the case between the boys and girls of any community other than the depressed classes.

The accepted policy in the Madras Presidency was the introduction of free compulsory education for all non-Muslim boys between the ages of 6 and 11, for Muslim boys between the ages of 8 and 13, and for all girls between the ages of 5 and 10. Certain exceptions had however been made in practice, Muslim girls being excluded from all schemes for the introduction of compulsion. This meant that the introduction of compulsory education for girls was permissible but was not yet regarded as fundamental either by government or by any organization responsible for the development of education in the Presidency. The Corporation of

Madras and the Municipal Councils of Erode and Cochin were the only exceptions to this as they had recognized the needs of girls as far as non-Muslim pupils were concerned. But the needs of girls who came forward voluntarily were neglected even in areas where compulsion was introduced. For example, the Corporation of Madras, which had excluded Muslims from the operation of the scheme of compulsory education failed to make proper provision for Muslim girls who came forward in such large numbers for education that it was not possible to provide for them in the then existing schools in which Urdu was the medium of instruction.[25]

The exclusion of girls from practically all schemes for the introduction of compulsory education, it was recognized, was one of the reasons for the great increase in disparity between the development of education for boys and girls during the quinquennium 1922-1927. It was also realized, the gendered perspective notwithstanding, that "if the total exclusion of Muslim girls is continued there is no doubt that this community will fall rapidly behind all others in the matter of education for both boys and girls, since it is impossible to bring boys of uneducated parents to the same standard of education as boys who come from homes in which the women as well as the men are educated". (emphasis added)[26]

The class and gender bias of the members comprising the Conference of the Gazetted Women Officers of the Education Department is clear from the following statement recorded by them while deliberating on the findings of the survey on female

education:

"Generally speaking, secondary education is intended for the wealthier classes who can afford to pay for it and a good elementary education free or at a low cost should be provided for girls who cannot afford to pay the fees of secondary schools. On the other hand, there are a considerable number of girls who would profit by secondary education but who are prevented from doing so by actual or relative poverty. ... It is <u>inevitable</u> in such cases, <u>even if the parents are not actually poverty-stricken</u> that the money available must first be spent in equipping the boys who are to be wage earners and that in many cases the girls must do without secondary education". (emphasis added)[27]

II

Teachers and Administrators :

The subtle manner in which colonial (gendered) perspectives on education were transplanted into the colony is amply demonstrated in the manner in which it was argued that in keeping with the trend elsewhere in the world (meaning largely England) "it will be necessary in the first place to replace all men teachers of the lower classes by women and subsequently to combine these classes with similar classes in schools for girls and thus to institute mixed primary classes".[28] Preston in her article on school-teaching in 19th century New England has examined the way in which state school officials actively promoted the feminization of teaching by writing extensively about women's "aptness" to teach because of certain "natural" feminine qualities.[29] Similar views were echoed by the officials in Madras:

"So far in the Madras Presidency it has been customary to staff all schools for boys with men teachers from the first class upward. In all countries it has been found that women are more efficient than men as teachers of very young children and there is no doubt that this is true of Indian women also. Ideally children of both sexes should be taught together below the age of nine in schools staffed entirely by women teachers and inspected by women officers who have received special training in methods of educating young children".[30]

A different dimension was added by Mayhew to this aspect of the feminization of teaching when he argued that: "It has been shown that the absence of women teachers for the lower classes of boys' schools increases the financial burden of mass education".[31] This is not to deny that very genuine cultural problems existed which needed solutions of a particular kind. But the issue of patriarchy (manifested here in the feminization of the teaching profession specially at the lower level) and the issue of lack of girl's schools/women teachers to cater to girl students belonging to particular communities need to be segregated in the analysis of gender discrimination in education.

Among men teachers, on 31st March 1927, there were approximately 13000 of the higher elementary grade and 26000 of the lower, that is, in the proportion of 1:2. Among women, the corresponding figures were 4000 and 2000, the proportion being the reverse that for men. This was considered `satisfactory' by the authorities. The provision for training Christian women teachers was fairly adequate. In contrast the supply of Hindu and Muhammadan women teachers were grossly inadequate. Hindu and Muslim women, unlike Christians, it was recorded, were accustomed to study only in local day schools, if these were not available they did not come forward for education, nor did they travel far to seek for training, and unless facilities for training existed within easy reach of their homes they did not take up teaching.[32]

The location of Mission Training Schools, as in the case of Mission Secondary Schools, usually prevented the attendance of

Hindu women at them as day scholars. This phenomenon was illustrated by the number of Hindu and Christian teachers in training schools as on 31st March 1927. In Mission Training schools there were 860 Christian students and 17 Hindus, while in the Government Training Schools the numbers were 407 and 457 respectively. The Muslim students, of whom there were 80, were entirely confined to government schools. Mission agencies were unable to provide for Hindu and Muslim women, and there were few, if any, non-mission aided agencies who were likely to assist in the development of training institutions. It was clear to the authorities that if the number of trained Hindu and Muslim teachers were to be increased, the necessary training schools had

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to be maintained by government. While data revealed that the districts in which the public had been prepared to accept co-education were the ones which had seen the most advance in girls' education, the Conference of Women Officers in their discussion on the possibility and disirability of developing co-education in the Madras Presidency resolved that pupils below the age of eight "should be taught together by women teachers"; as regards pupils above this age they reached the following conclusion:- "that co-education was not objected to by the backward classes or by the educationally advanced but there was a strong feeling against it in the middle classes and that, as it was amongst this class that most rapid progress could be made at present, co-education on any considerable scale could not be introduced effectively

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now". (emphasis added).

It was seen that the progress of elementary education for girls did not vary directly with the provision made for training women teachers; but from the fact that, of the ten districts in which there were no elementary training classes for girls in the vernacular of the locality, eight were to be found in the thirteen most backward districts, it was clear that the progress in the provision of good supply of trained women teachers was one of the factors which controlled the development of elementary education for girls.[35]

While it was felt that good progress could be made if suitable men teachers were appointed, in general, however, it was asserted that the appointment of a staff of women teachers in a girls' school was essential if the duration of the school life of girl pupils was to be lengthened sufficiently to make certain that the pupils would be permanently literate on leaving schools. The plea always given by local bodies when pressed for additional girls' schools or more teachers or better pay for women teachers was absence of finance. But an examination of the then existing distribution of money, however, pointed to the conclusion that, if a more systematic procedure were adopted for the provision of educational facilities for both boys and girls in the area under the control of each local board, much more adequate and equitable provision could be made for pupils of both sexes for the same amount expended. Another disability with regard to girls' elementary education was the smaller contribution made by aided agencies in the spread of education for girls.[36]

In the case of higher education there existed a dearth of women science teachers and medical women, and, whereas, there were five colleges for women in the Presidency and two in Travancore, of which three were on the West Coast, the only first grade colleges for women in which science courses were provided were those in Madras city. "It was generally agreed that only comparatively wealthy girls could afford to take their university courses in Madras and that the poorer students of the West Coast had no alternative but to take History, English or Philosophy since these were the only courses provided on the West Coast.[37] (emphasis added).

The Director of Public Instruction in his letter to the Secretary to Government, Educational Department, Madras, recorded that the Inspectresses of Girls' Schools had brought to his notice the demand for a larger provision of secondary education for girls in institutions under entirely unsectarian management.[38] Admirable though the mission schools were from most points of view, there seemed no room for doubt, that high caste Hindu parents hesitated to send their girls to these schools and there was consequently need for increasing the number of government secondary schools for girls. The Director also noted the need for shifting the Presidency Training School for Mistresses from Egmore to Triplicane (the Brahman dominated residential suburb) so that there was an increase in the number of caste women 'taking up the teaching profession. "It is an established fact (?) that we must look to the class of widows for our chief supply of caste women teachers, and, that, unless the

supply can be steadily increased little progress can be made with the higher education of caste girls, since the only alternative, the employment of Indian Christian women is repugnant to popular feeling". (emphasis added)[39].

Women in the Educational field in an Administrative capacity

Women's entry into the educational profession as teachers, principals, inspectresses etc and the service rules that governed them was/is another aspect that clearly revealed the existence of two sets of norms. On the one hand the new social and political commitment to equality of educational opportunities to women did not by the same token lead to questioning old beliefs asserting the rightness of inequality and the rightness of a distinction between men and women in their capacities and proper roles. The deliberations surrounding the subject of the reorganization of women's educational service illustrate among other things, how assumptions about women's nature set up stumbling blocks for the advancement of women in the educational profession.

In 1917 when the Government of India addressed local governments on the subject of the reorganisation of educational services based on the recommendations of the Public Services Commission, they made it clear that the Commission's recommendations for women would not be taken up along with men. It was only <u>after</u> proposals in respect of men's educational service had been submitted to the Secretary of State that the government of India took up the question of the reorganisation of the women's educational service for which they solicited the views of the provincial governments on various points.[40][41]

A loaded memorandum prepared by the Acting Director of Public Instruction, Madras, on the subject of women engaged in the educational services brings out subtly not only what Altback and Kelly refer to as "the educational manifestations of colonialism" but also, more significantly a gendered approach to what was otherwise supposed to further the cause of women in the educational profession.[42] The memorandum begins with the unqualified premise, that, notwithstanding, the strides that had been made in the advancement of female education, yet, the large majority of the people of India were opposed to female education, while, an extremely small minority were in favour of advanced female education; that, the social customs of India obstructed any proposals for an advance in the higher branches of instruction among women which factor was so essential to produce locally efficient teachers and a suitable female inspecting staff.[43]

The fact that male members in the educational profession in England were uniformly paid more than women was taken as sufficient justification for paying Indian women teachers less than their male counterparts. Giving details of wages the acting DPI pointed out,

a) that the pay of an Inspector in Madras was Rs.500-1000 while that of an Inspectress was Rs.400-600.

b) that, in India, Madras stood first in the actual number of women engaged in inspecting work, but, Madras had an absolute as well as a relatively larger number of low-paid appointments

(Rs.200 or less per mensem) than any other province in India.

c) Turning to salaries in secondary and training schools in India it was observed that Madras had 32 appointments reaching to Rs.100 per month or over, Bengal 23, Bombay 22 and the other provinces and Native states even less. Madras thus appeared to be far ahead of the other parts of India in the number of higher paid appointments in secondary and special education.

d) A perusal of the statement showing the salaries then being paid to women teachers in elementary schools in India indicated that in Bombay the maximum pay was Rs.70, in Madras 65, and in Bengal Rs.50 p.m., while the majority had pay about Rs.10 to Rs.12 per mensem.[44]

In England, the 'natural maternal' instinct argument led to the feminization of the teaching profession which was specially marked in elementary education.[45] This in turn led to the elementary teacher being considered of a lower social status than the teacher in, say, a secondary school, and, this factor legitimised the payment of a lower salary to the elementary school teacher. But the relative disparity in pay of elementary school women teacher in England and in India was so great that the acting DPI was constrained to note that the question of the appointment of European trained teachers to elementary schools in India was, for financial reasons, outside the range of practical politics.[46] "Even if we could persuade them to come, we should be doing our country women an injustice if we brought them out to this country on a salary less than that which would permit them

to live as gentlewomen, and this country (that is, India) cannot afford Rs.350 per mensem for its elementary school teachers".[47]

The assumptions and presumptions regarding Indian social customs and the modes of life among the different communities led to definitive statements justifying payment of different salaries to women members of different communities; however, all women teachers, irrespective of the community to which they belonged, were paid less than men doing similar work.[48] The DPI observed thus: "It is desirable that no women teacher receive a salary less than Rs.12 per mensem, but so long as Indian thought continues (?) unchanged with regard to the relative positions in the social life of men and women, and, so long as questions of economy remain of prime importance, just so long will it be impossible to raise the minimum pay of a woman in this country above that of a man who does similar work, even though such course were considered - a doubtful assumption - desirable on a survey of the relative needs of the normal life of men and of women".[49] It was assumed that the mode of life of an Eurasian demanded a higher wage than that required by the Hindu, but, it was argued that it was not possible to fix the salaries of teachers in elementary schools at a figure that would attract the Anglo-Indian: "such a salary would suffice for the employment of several Hindu women teachers if such were only available".[50] (emphasis added)

For the establishment of the Queen Mary's College the Madras government requested the Government of India to sanction two

Indian Educational Service Lady Professors.[51] Of the two ladies, the senior was to be the Principal, and the salaries recommended were 500-25-750 and 400-20-500, without exchange compensation allowance. The lower rate (400-20-500) was the usual amount paid to Indian Educational Service inspectresses.[52] The Government of India in its recommendation pointed out that while the payment of nil exchange compensation allowance was in accordance with the Government of India's reorganisation proposal, the classification of the two recruits under Indian Educational Service would create a piquant situation. Inclusion in the service could not be accompanied by a deprivation of a concession that was admissible to all other members of the Service. To get over the problem the course suggested by the Government of India was to place the ladies recruited outside the regular cadres so as to make them inelligible for the exchange compensation allowance.[53] It was only after the college was placed on a permanent footing that the posts were included in the Service. And yet, while inclusion in the service standardized women's services it did not give them equal remuneration vis-a-vis their male counterparts (emphasis added).

The Public Services Commission had recommended, that, as in the case of the service for men, there would be a women's educational service to comprise class I, class II and special appointments, and also a subordinate service. Class I was to comprise, on the collegiate side, Principals of all Arts Colleges, Principals of Professional colleges (excepting Law and Medicine), Professors of all first grade Arts and Professional

colleges, and the Headmaster of the Central High School, Mercara. On the administrative side, Inspectors of Schools, and the then existing appointments of Deputy Director and Personal Assistant to the Director of Public Instruction were to be included. Class II was to include on the collegiate side all lecturers, Assistant Professors and Assistant lecturers in all Arts and Teachers' Colleges, and on the administrative side, Assistant Inspectors and other officers of equivalent rank.[54] For all the posts, so far as pay was concerned, the proposals submitted by the DPI, Madras, was lower than those recommended by the Government of India; in fact the DPI felt that the Government of India's proposals were more than what was necessary to secure suitable recruits in the South of India.[55] (emphasis added)

Table 5 gives a comparative statement of the scale of pay recommended for male members of Class I and that suggested by the Government of India for women.

Tables 6 and 7 give rates of salary for class I and II women recruits indicating the then existing scale of pay and those recommended by the various bodies, central and local.

The lesser scales of pay recommended for women was sought to be argued away simply by stating that "as it is the practice everywhere to pay women with similar qualifications at lower rates than men, the Governor-General in Council accepts the (discriminatory) rates of pay as suitable".[56] Much was made of the "climate of the plains" being "more trying to a woman's constitution than to a man's and hence the Governor-General in

Council recommended that women officers were to be given more generous terms as far as leave facilities were concerned.[57] Again, it was stated that since "women inspecting officers in the Presidency are put to much inconvenience and have to incur also heavy expense when on tour for want of proper conveyances and properly furnished rest houses at the places they visit", they were to be compensated to some extent by the grant of a higher rate of travelling allowance than was then admissible.[58]

The discussions on the conditions for payment of pension to women was another terrain where the enmeshing of colonial and gender perspectives was clearly discernible. As early as 1908, in a letter forwarded to the Government of India, the DPI, Madras, requested modification of the pension rules as applicable to Indian women.[59] The argument ran something like this:

"Under article 358(a) of the Civil Service Regulations (4th edition), an officer's service does not in the case of superior service qualify for pension till he has completed twenty years of age. Indian women, especially in this Presidency, are, by their nature and climatic influence, fitted to commence service qualifying for superior pension much earlier than at the age fixed in the regulations. Moreover under article 114 of the Madras Educational Rules, native women teachers become eligble to be trained for teaching work at the age of 14, so that, they are in a positin to enter government service when 15 or 16 years old; but they are unfit as a rule for efficient work after their 50th year. ... In these circumstances I request you to be so good as to obtain the sanction of the Government of India to the

following additions being made to article 358(a) referred to above:

"but in the case of non-European women teachers in Madras, service qualifying for pension on the superior scale commences after an officer has completed sixteen years of age" (emphasis added).[60]

In her evidence before the Public Service Commission Mrs.Drysdale, Chief Inspectress of girls' schools, echoed similar views. She stated that Inspectresses should receive a pension after twenty years' service as that was quite long enough for a woman to work in India.[61] The Government of India also proposed that women were to be permitted to retire after 20 years service on proportionate pension reckoned in the usual way subject to a maximum of Rs.4000 but that they should not be allowed any increase beyond the maximum of Rs.5000 then permissible after 25 years' service, since "service beyond that period is not to be encouraged in the case of women" (emphasis added).[62]

Table 5

Recommendation of Differential Pay Scales for Men and Women Teachers

Class I

Service for men Scale recommended by the Government of Madras	Scale finally recommended by India to the Secretary of State for Men's Service	Service for women Scale suggested by the Govt of India
a) Rs.400-50-1,250 per mensem. Selection grade upto 15 per cent of the cadre Rs.1,300-50-1,600 per mensem.	Rs.550-30-1,550 Selection upto 15 per cent 1,500-50-1,750.	Rs.400-25-850 per mensem
b) Special compensatory allowance of one-third of the pay to Europeans and to Indians recruited in Europe subject to a maximum of Rs.2,000 per mensem.	To be allowed to all officers with European qualifications irrespective of place of recruitment. Allowance of Rs.150 to Principals and one allowance of Rs.250 to a selected Principal	Selection grade upto 20 percent of the cadre Rs.900-50-1,100 per mensem.

Source: Home Department (Education) G.O. No.1349-50, 1st November 1919 (Press).

Table 6

Salary Scales for Class I Women Members as recommended by Various Bodies

Rates of pay allowed to the lady members of the Indian Educational Service	Rates recommended by the Public Services Commission	Rates proposed by the Government of India	Rates suggested by the Director of Public Instruction, Madras	Rates suggested by Home (Education) Madras
1	2	3	4	5
One Principal (400-20-500-25-750) plus local allowance Rs.200. One Professor (400-20-500-25-750). One Professor (400) One Inspector (500-20-600) One Inspector (450-10-500) One Inspector (400-10-450) One Superintendent, Egmore Training School (350-10-450)	First five years-400-20-500 Thereafter-500-25-600 (No reference to the payment of any allowance to the Principal or other officer.	Ordinary grade-400-25-800 Selection grade for 20 per cent of the number of posts - 900-10-1100 (No reference to the payment of any allowance to the Principal or other officer).	400-20-500-25-750 with a duty allownace of Rs.150 for any officer who has been for five years on the maximum and an allowance to the Principal of a College and to the Senior Inspectress (amount not stated).	Same as in column (3) plus a local allowance of Rs.150 to the Principal of the College only

Source: Home Department (Education) G.O. No.1349-50, 1st November 1919 (Press).

Table 7

Salary Scales for Class II Women Members as recommended by various Bodies

As recommended by the Public Services Commission	The scale which the Government of India proposed to recommend	As recommended by the Director of Public Instruction	As proposed by the Home Department
Rs. 200-10-400	Rs. 200-500 (details to be fixed by the local Government)	The Director of Public Instruction did not advocate the formation of a definite class II service. For the posts which could be considered as equivalent to those which India contemplated placing in class II, he proposed rates of salary varying from Rs.125 to Rs.250 exclusive of allowance to heads of secondary and training schools.	Scale suggested by the Government of India together with a selection grade for 20 per cent of the officers with an ultimate maximum of Rs.750. Further details were to be worked out.

Source: Home Department (Education) G.O. No.1349-50, 1st November 1919 (Press).

III

The beginnings of higher education for women: Government initiatives

The "desirability for a separate non-sectarian college for women"[63] formed the basis for the setting up of the first government college for women. In the deliberations surrounding this proposal we highlight the manner in which the missionaries objected to any form of government intervention in the field of education. The government thus, had to grapple, at one level, with a dominant body with a powerful backing in England; at another level it had to adapt its policies to the dominant viewpoint among the colonized.

At the budget meetings of 1911 and 1912, Rao Bahadur T S Balakrishna Ayyar urged upon Government the desirability of establishing a college solely intended for women in the Presidency.[64] The then existing institutions for collegiate instruction of non-European women were the Sarah Tucker College, Palamcottah, and the United Free Church Mission College, Royapuram, both of which were of the second grade, the latter being unaffiliated to the University. As on 31st March 1912, the former institution had eight pupils on its rolls and the latter seven. With the exception of only one, all the students belonged to the Indian Christian community. Besides there were 30 women students reading in the Arts colleges for men. 19 of them were in the institutions in Madras, the rest in the mufassal colleges. It was not known from what communities these students were drawn. But, according to the DPI, not many would have been drawn from

the Hindu community.[65]

The intention of the Government to open a separate college for women brought forth protests from the Missionary Educational Council of South India whose spokesperson, Sir Andrew Fraser, Chairman of the Interdenominational Committee on Education in the Mission Field, in his letter to Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras, made it clear in no uncertain terms, that, "it is better to have the arrangements for women's colleges made by private agency".[66] He apprised the Governor about the decision arrived at the World Missionary Conference to establish a Christian Arts College at Madras with a special training department. Fraser also hinted that Miss McDougall, a recognized and trained teacher from London, would be its first Principal.[67]

Miss McDougall and Miss E.Roberts (another trained teacher from London) had travelled in India in the cold weather of 1912-13 and recorded their impressions of the work that was being done for the education of women and girls in India.[68] In the context of the Madras Government's proposal to start a college, and Fraser's letter indicating the Christian Mission's plan of starting a college with McDougall as Principal, the conclusions that McDougall and Roberts had been "inevitably led" by their acquaintance with Indian University women, are worth quoting:[69]

> "The college", i.e., a college for women, "should be on a distinctly and avowedly Christian basis. There are many reasons for this, but two in especial seem to me very cogent in India.

In the first place, parents of all creeds will more willingly entrust their daughters to Christian care than to any other. Some anxiety is felt about possible change in religion, but these are outweighed by the confidence that the girl will be in good moral atmosphere, that her health will be carefully guarded that she will be treated with sympathetic kindness and above all that she will be protected from moral danger. In the second place work in secular education will never attract to Indian women of the type most needed for the new college. A university women bred at one of the English residential colleges has a number of interesting and lucrative careers open to her at home in comparison with which India with its trying climate, its distance from home, its scanty pay and limited possibilities of advance offers no attraction. Of course there are exceptions but in our experience of Indian schools and colleges, it is only a sense of vocation that brings out from England, women of the best type, intellectual, moral and social to take up the very trying work of a teacher in India".

Lord Pentland, in his reply to Fraser was highly critical of the stand taken by the Missionary Council and particularly of McDougall's observations. While acknowledging that the Madras Presidency owed perhaps more to Christian effort in education than any other part of India, he nevertheless, pointed out that there was in South India, a strong orthodox caste Hindu opinion,

which, according to Lord Pentland, "growingly sensitive of the influence of christianity in public education, is peculiarly distrustful of its influence upon Hindu women and girls".[70] This was seen as a real obstacle to the progress of education among Indian women.

At one level the provision of college education by government (ostensibly on secular lines) was expected to lead to a progressive increase in the number of Hindu women students. At another level the Government explicitly realized that college education would provide "the opportunities desired by the increasing number of higher caste and wealthy Indian young women who under no necessity or desire to seek University distinction but wishing to continue their education for its own sake are not willing or not allowed to do so under definitely christian influence".[71]

Missionary protest to any proposal from Government to set up educational institutions was not new, specially to the Madras government.[72] When in the year 1910, the Government of Madras, in pursuance of the Government of India policy to establish government high schools in each district, proposed to convert ten board and five private high schools in certain districts into government model schools, the Missionary Council on aided education in Madras approached the Government of India with a strong protest against the scheme as likely to hamper the progress of aided education in that Presidency. The local government thereupon gave up the original idea.[73]

Again, a similar protest was made in 1913, this time in respect of the wording of clause (iii) of paragraph 11 of the Resolution of February 1913, which laid down that the "expansion (of primary education) should be secured by means of board schools except where this is financially impossible when aided schools under recognized management should be encouraged".(74) The Missionaries immediately feared that the opening of board schools would be harmful to the progress of aided education and prayed that in the contemplated expansion of primary education the work of aided bodies would be fully recognized and suggested certain safeguards to this end.[75] The Madras Government's reaction to this memorial was quite scathing as revealed in the notings of various officials some of which are worth reproducing:[76]

a) "The memorial is one of a series of documents. The missionaries of South India seem to have a sort of political organization (with agents at home) whose object is to push the case of missionary schools. They are not bound by educational principles and would, for example, rather have the country overrun with inefficient missionary schools than with good government schools.

b) Their (missionary) attitude is to the effect that they have vested rights in Indian education. They talk of the `rights of aided education.' They also assume that the Government of India is forever bound by somewhat unsound statements of their predecessors (example, the

1882 Report).

c) They are now attempting to get a definite declaration of policy that will tie the hands of Government and what they propose is practically that their societies shall have the monopoly of extension - they should extend where they please, while Government should not make any extension without consulting them.

d) The argument that missionaries have fostered education for many years has no weight. It is not quite correct: they have and do only use "education" as a means to their own end, which, however worthy it may seem, is not the end desired by the people of India".[77]

Despite the protest the Government of Madras decided to go ahead with its plans to open a college for women on the following lines, namely,

(i) that the Presidency Training School for Mistresses, Madras, would be developed into an institution providing for collegiate instruction for girls;

ii) that arrangements would be made for opening therein a junior intermediate class first and a senior intermediate class the following year;

iii) that two women teachers with first class qualifications, recruited in England would be provided for the purpose.[78]

With reference to the above decision of Government, the office of the DPI came up with the following proposals:[79]

a) The Director suggested the opening of a women's college for one year on a temporary basis with a view to avoid the delay which would be occasioned by recruitment of lady professors in England and also with a view to test the extent of the demand that existed for a purely secular college for women.

b) As regards subjects for instruction, the Director suggested that only group III of the intermediate course would be taught initially. Under University Regulation 179, students for the intermediate examination had to undergo the following courses of study:

I English language and literature

II Composition in one of the vernaculars, or translation into English from one of the classical and foreign languages named in Regulation 176.

III One of the following optional subjects:

i) Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry

ii) Natural Science, Physics and Chemistry

iii) Any three of the following subjects:

(a) Ancient History

b) Modern History

c) Logic

d) A classical language

e) A second classical language or one of the foreign or Indian vernacular languages mentioned in Regulation 176.

The DPI's suggestion that students of the women's college would take up group (iii) of item III (in addition, of course, to the compulsory items I and II) was approved. Any attempt to take

science subjects i.e. groups (i) and (ii) of item III was considered impracticable owing to the absence of laboratories.[80] Earlier the Hon'ble Mr.Sivaswami Ayyar, in his demi-official of 29th July 1913, had observed that "it would be desirable at the outset not to make any provision for the scientific groups as they would involve much expenditure in the way of laboratories, equipment, etc." which immediately found favour with the authorities.[81] It was also felt that the college for women would attract many women students since such students "will rather prefer to take up group (iii) - literary subjects than either group (i) or group (ii) which will probably be more difficult for them" (all emphasis added). Within two years the Secretary of State allowed the College to be placed on a permanent footing. In 1917 with Her Majesty the Queen's permission the name of the College was changed to 'Queen Mary's College for Women.'[82]

At the Conference of Women Officers the development of Queen Mary's College was one of the subjects discussed.[83] The suggestions made with regard to the expansion of Queen Mary's college were that provisions were to be made for a wider choice of Intermediate subjects, the development of science courses above the Intermediate and the provision of honours courses in some subjects. Geography and music had since been included among the Intermediate courses while the science block was in the process of being erected.[84]

It was urged that it was often difficult for women to get admission to the Honours' course in the Presidency College and that a certain number of students who were capable of doing

Honours' work chose a pass course at Queen Marys' college in preference to attending a men's college. It was therefore urged, that, "it was not good for the status of women's colleges and for the standard of work in them to have no Honours' courses".[85] Further it was observed that both in English and in History, the staff at Queen Mary's college were qualified to conduct Honours' courses and that the institution of these courses at an early date was possible and strongly recommended.[86]

In addition to Queen Mary's college, there were in existence at the beginning of the thirties four Arts colleges under private management.[87] The strength of these colleges as on 31st March 1926 were as follows:-

First Grade	Strength
1. Queen Mary's College	173
2. Madras Christian College for Women	129
3. St.Agnes College, Mangalore	65
Second Grade	
4. Teppakulam Holy Cross College, Trichy	7
5. Sarah Tucker College, Palamcottah	16
Total	390

Besides, there were also 72 women students studying in men's colleges due to the fact that none of the women's colleges provided instruction for the Honours' course.[88]

Perspectives on `suitable' curricula for girls

In 1913 the Government of India Resolution on Educational Policy considered the immediate problem in the education of girls

as one of social development.[89] While hesitating to lay down general lines of policy which would hamper local governments and administrations (because "the existing customs and ideas opposed to the education of girls will require different handling in different parts of India") the Government of India, nevertheless, commended the following principles for general consideration: (emphasis added).

a) "The education of girls should be practical with reference to the position which they will fill in social life;

b) It should not seek to imitate the education suitable for boys nor should it be dominated by examinations;

c) Special attention should be paid to hygiene and the surroundings of school life;

d) The services of women should be more freely enlisted for instruction and inspection; and

e) Continuity in inspection and control shoul be specially aimed at".[90]

There had been a growing demand for alternative courses for girls and an expression of public opinion with reference to this point was made at the first "All-India Women's Conference on Educational Reform" held in Poona in January 1927 which passed a resolution that "alternative courses should be established to suit the needs of girls who do not intend to take up college education".[91] The idea was not a new one and attempts had been made to develop alternative courses in the then existing high

schools for girls.[92] These however had met with little response. Such attempts had been made in mission boarding schools, in the Presidency, but, according to the authorities, parents had not been convinced that the value of a course (which did not lead to the acquirement of a recognised certifcate) justified the heavy expenditure entailed in the form of school and boarding fees.

The exact implication of the term `alternative courses' was never elucidated. In general it appeared to convey the desire for a more general course of study than was possible under the then existing Secondary School Leaving Certificate scheme (this introduced specialisation at a comparatively early stage), and for the inclusion of better and fuller courses in subjects such as drawing and music, practical hygiene and domestic science <u>on the lines of the courses in these subjects which were included in the curriculum of practically all secondary schools for girls in England</u>, in addition to the subjects ordinarily included in the curriculum of secondary schools for Indian girls (emphasis added).[93]

In their Resolution on Female Education in 1919, the Government of India alluded to the public criticism of the curricula hitherto followed, <u>firstly</u>, on the ground that the courses did not allow sufficient variety, and, <u>secondly</u>, that they were not properly adopted for the special use of girls. As regards curriculum the production of special textbooks suitable for girls in the higher classes of primary schools was deemed a matter for consideration. Further, it was pointed out that "there is a growing feeling against the exclusion of religious teaching

and observances from school life, and the feeling is more accentuated in the case of girls than in that of boys... The Government of India are of opinion that it would not be advisable to lay down any uniform system to be followed in all localities in respect of religious teaching either for boys or for girls but they feel that in the case of girls a rather greater degree of elasticity can be given to the curriculum in this respect and local bodies should do what they reasonably can to meet genuine local sentiment in the matter" (emphasis added).[94]

The character of the secondary education to be imparted to girls brought forth very divergent views. Broadly there were two main schools of thought. The one school wanted girls to be brought up on lines as similar as possible to those laid down for boys and prepare them for a university career. The other opinion wanted girls to be prepared primarily for home life and held that women were to be educated in all that concerned enlightened mothering, a good standard of maternal physique, better care of infancy, appropriate feeding, care and management of children, effective attention to children's diseases and generally to their physical condition, good sanitary environment and other matters of domestic concern.[95]

The Calcutta University Commission dealt with this subject at some length, and, among other things, suggested that "in future schools should be so organized as to meet, on the one hand, the needs of the majority who will spend their lives in the zenana and whose education will cease at an early age, and, on the other hand, those of the small but important minority who

will take to professional service or play a part in the progressive section of Indian society.[96] The government accepted fully the two principles underlying the proposals of the commission, namely, the modification of the curriculum in order to suit the needs of girls and women of different classes, and secondly the utilization of the advice of ladies in formulating a suitable system of instruction" (emphasis added).[97]

The Conference of Women Officers in Madras expressed the need for the total revision of the Secondary School Leaving Certificate course and also laid down that:-

a) no distinction was to be made between the courses for boys and girls in so far as the compulsory subjects were concerned;

b) it was decided that the compulsory subjects should include vernacular, English, mathematics, history and citizenship geography and general science;

c) the possibility of including a good course of hygiene and domestic science among compulsory subjects was discussed but since it was felt that the high school course as far as compulsory subjects were concerned would be the same for boys as well as for girls this subject could not be included among the compulsory subjects.[98]

It was agreed that there was no need for the development of alternative courses for women at the university stage, and, that the number of students who wished for courses beyond the high

school stage but who were not provided for would be few, if any. It was thought that there were some girls who wished to study further than the SSLC but who would not wish to follow a full university course, and it was decided that these students could be provided for in the then existing Government College for Women (later named Queen Mary's College). It was not considered necessary to institute any special courses for them since it was agreed that courses in some of the subjects then included in the Intermediate course would be provided at Queen Mary's college for the benefit of ordinary students and that, with these, sufficient facilities would be afforded to these special students.[99]

The deliberations of a resolution moved in the Legislative Council (recommending the setting up of a committee of officials and non-officials for the purpose of revising the curricula of studies and for devising suitable methods to be followed for the improvement and greater diffusion of education among girls in the Presidency) is a telling commentary on the (gendered) ideology of the times.[100] K.R.V.Rao, mover of the resolution, wanted an enquiry into all matters touching the education of girls and women in all its aspects, domestic, intellectual, moral, artistic, physical and religious. "Women in India are not supposed to compete with men in appointments and the education which girls have to be given from the beginning will have to be such as would be of use to them in after life, in order to make them good housewives and useful members of society", he concluded.[101]

An androcentric approach to curricula framing was thus one part of the story: the primacy of this approach, however, led to (a) very minimal facilities being afforded to girl students in general as compared to those provided for boys; (b) very few options for diversification as far as higher education was concerned; and (c) a definite class-biased agenda for growth.

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Shades of the "biological determinist" argument to curricula framing was apparent in the reasoning put forth by Mayhew to institute a `lighter' course for girls.

> "What gives cause for alarm in the present situation is not the close resemblance of the girls' curriculum to that of boys nor the absence of special vocational training which must be premature until general education has been fairly established, but the excessive physical strain imposed on girls by requiring of them the same number of subjects and the same standard in those subjects as is required for boys. This is particularly disastrous under the climatic and physiological conditions that obtain in India. ...It is certain, for instance, that the compulsory courses in English and Mathematics could, without domestic or national loss, be made far lighter for girls"[103].

The exact manner in which the colonizer's perspectives on education for women got incorporated into the curriculum designed for the colonized is yet to be explored concretely and in depth. It would not be out of place, however, to refer to studies that outline the manner in which women's education was perceived in

nineteenth century England, which found its echo in the deliberations on educational policy for women in India which we have outlined above.

Sara Delamont's study of the nineteenth century women in England brings out very succintly the cultural and physical world

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that defined women's existence during that period. According to Delamont, throughout the nineteenth century the debate about the proper education and life-work for women was conducted along class lines. Here three strata were distinguished: the upper class (which in Britain meant the old aristocracy and landed gentry plus the richest families thrown up by the industrial revolution; and in America the long established wealthy families); the newly-emerging middle classes, made up of professional and managerial workers rather than owners of land and capital; and the mass of the workers (including the skilled artisans and the unskilled labourers which in the USA meant the new immigrants). The role and status of women was quite different in the three spheres, and controversies over education

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and work were based on very different premises.

`Double-conformity' is the term used by Delamont to define the education for middle and upper class girls and women who had to adhere to two sets of rigid standards; "those of ladylike behaviour at all times and those of the dominant male cultural and education system." Delamont has divided the campaigners of women's education into two groups. - the uncompromising - "who were determined that women should do what men did, warts and all"

- and the separatists - "who favoured modified courses for women".[106]

The uncompromising group argued that a special curricula for girls would have no recognized standard or status, would allow employers to discriminate and to support the claim that women were mentally inferior to men. While not fully supporting the traditional curriculum, this group however pointed out that new subjects would only succeed as worthwhile when elite men took up such courses. The separatists, on the other hand, wanted courses for women which were "particularly suited to their future as teachers, nurses and mothers. They were certainly genuine in their beliefs, but played into the hands of men who did not want women to have any education at all. These men were keen to educate women in separate courses, give them separate examinations and generally to confine them to a cultural ghetto."[107]

In retrospect, Delamont points out, that the pioneers who held out for equal educational standards and curricula were correct to do so since a `special women's course' would have led to women being confined forever in an intellectual and spiritual purdah. "They recognized a simple truth - that separate never means equal - which has escaped many subsequent commentators."[108]

Another very important aspect stressed by Delamont is the total reversal of the relations between sex and curriculum content in the working class versus the middle and upper classes. "In the middle of the nineteenth century the content of working-

class education in both Britian and America was hardly differentiated by sex while the education of the upper, and the emerging middle classes was highly sex-specific, with distinct curricula for boys and girls. By about 1920, however, a complete change had occurred, with the working classes receiving sex-specific instruction while the middle and upper classes were offered a curriculum relatively undifferentiated by sex."[109]

The deliberations in India at the official level (which is what we have covered in this paper) on `suitable' curricula for girls broadly corresponds to the arguments put forth by Delamont's two groups, namely, the uncompromising and the separatists. But, as Delamont lays down, these were elitist solutions to the dilemmas of the times. Neither pattern was of any immediate use to working class women. A detailed examination of the contents of what passed for women's education from a class standpoint is as important and needs to be tackled simultaneously with a study unravelling the androcentricity of the issue. Besides, various actors in this unfolding drama need to be examined, particularly, the various womens groups (autonomous and those belonging to particular political parties) who made up the `women's movement' then.

IV

To recapitulate the main burden of our argument thus far:-

a) the impetus for the development of the formal education of girls had more to do with the notion of imparting "a far greater impulse to the educational and moral tone of the people in general and of men's education in particular" 110 than in any `equal rights liberal reformist' espousal of equality of educational opportunities for girls;

b) official data document the disparity in the education of girls at various levels with the degree of disparity increasing as one went up the educational ladder. Educational `backwardness' was also seen to be greater in the case of the more orthodox communities. The depressing (numerical) development of female education was sought to be explained as facts indicating "an indifference to the education of their girls on the part of the bulk of the community much greater than was suggested by the mere percentage of girls in schools, small as that is, because it is a fair inference -- that of all the girls born in the Presidency in any year only about 20,000 will receive even an elementary education as against as many as 15,000 ten years ago ... The cause of this indifference so far as they lie in the mental and social characteristics of the people 111 are well known".(emphasis added).

c) Throughout the period under study women had been encouraged to attend schools only to face a curriculum that had been designed to perpetuate a culture of femininity and

motherhood. A restricted curriculum and a low level of academic-achievement expectation from girls (consequent upon a role socialization that emphasized for women the fulfilment of her `natural' destiny as wife and mother) had severe implications, most important being total exclusion of women from areas and careers traditionally defined as male domains.

d) The limited discussion surrounding the establishment of Queen Mary's College and the courses envisaged for the women students of the college document, among other things, "the inferior quality" of the education imparted to women. The larger implication of this phenomenon needs to be spelt out. Even granting the advantages of an interventionist programme and a positive discrimination approach on behalf of girls and women to break what Nava refers to as the `causal cycle of deprivation', [112] so long as schools/colleges impart different messages to their male and female students, development of female education could result only in numerical expansion over a period of time. Limited accessibility to higher education and within this the limited choice of courses of instruction could not but lead to a phenomenon that has been widely documented in feminist literature as that "women tend to work in women's work".

e) The service conditions envisaged for women teachers and administrators and the pay scales fixed for them, document on the surface the implicit recognition of a structural position of subordination and economic dependency on the part of women. Underlying most of the so-called progressive

legislations was the need to keep intact relations of domination and subordination between the sexes, which would otherwise have suffered disruption, had women gained equality in the real sense of the term.

f) The usual features of a colonial relationship in the field of education in general, manifested itself in various ways. But in the field of women's education it worked its way through the reproduction in the colony of some of the partriarchal relations of the colonizer. Colonial superiority for example, found expression in the assumed inability of the Indian women to work beyond the age of 50.

The problem of the expansion of women's education was compounded by a whole host of other issues, each of which needs to be explored further to get a picture of the complexity of the subject:-

(i) In the first place the repeated emphasis on the moral education of females depicted shades of the evangelical emphasis, that Banks has shown to have characterized the education of British women.[113] When the need to increase the employment opportunities of women was stressed, then it was only the field of nursing and teaching that found a mention.

(ii) An in-depth community-wise analysis of educational opportunities that was provided and availed of is essential in the light of the fact, that, the scheme for the imposition of compulsory education in the first place was leniently applied in the case of non-Muslim girls, while

Muslim girls were excluded altogether. What needs to be addressed is not just the role of the colonial state, but, more important the role of the orthodox males of each community, their patriarchal domination which determined <u>how much</u> and <u>what kind</u> of education was imparted to the females of their respective communities.

(iii)An aspect that was recorded in passing but not really elaborated nor studied in any depth thus far (to the best of our knowledge) was the move to shift the Widows' Home at Egmore to Triplicane in Madras (the latter a suburb in Madras that housed mainly orthodox Brahmans) so that widows could be trained as teachers. Not only does this call for an examination of the magnitude of this social problem but also a probe into the question as to why the Government considered it "an established fact that we must look to the class of widows for our chief supply of caste women teachers".[114] There is also the need to explore this phenomenon from the angle of the need expressed for "unattached" ladies from different communities to make up the teaching staff.[115] Oram has shown in her study that during the 1920's and 1930's most women teachers in England and Wales were spinsters.[116] This was due to the regulations requiring women teachers to resign on marriage. In the Indian social context, it was argued, that the "universality of marriage and the wide prevalence of very early marriage make it almost impossible to employ <u>unmarried</u> women for the work".[117] It was therefore felt that the

"vast array of Hindu widows, deprived of the right of second marriage and occupying domestic positions of degrading inferiority, ought to supply the required service in schools"[118].

(iv) Another passing statement with tremendous political implications that needs to be studied was the explicit pandering to middle-class values and the primacy given to this class over all others. In the discussion on co-education the Conference of Women Officers made it clear that "there was a strong feeling against it (co-education) among this (middle) class and that, as it was amongst this class that most rapid progress could be made at present, co-education on any considerable scale could not be introduced effectively now"[119].

In the West, the contested terrain for the main 'feminist' battle was the field of higher education. It was here that the different "faces of feminism" manifested itself in as much as women themselves as individuals and as members of particular groups differed radically in their analysis of the subject of women's education and consequently came up with solutions that were diametrically opposed.[120]

An examination of the circumstances that brought in higher education for women in this country in general and in the Presidency in particular is long overdue. We hope to make a beginning by concentrating in particular on the historical development of Queen Mary's College, the first Government College for women. This institution-based study, we hope, will not only

throw light on many of the observations that we have made above but more important, it is our contention that the manner in which these and other issues were resolved had important implications for the subsequent course of women's higher education.

Notes and References

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6. Walby, Sylvia, Theorizing Patriarchy, Basil Blackwell U.K. 1990, p20

7. Quoted in Freeman, Bonnie Cook, "Female Education in Patriarchal Power Systems" in Philip G Altbach and Gail P Kelly (Eds.) : Education and Colonialism, Longman Inc, N.York, 1978, p208-209

8. We have made use of Sylvia Walby's categories for our analysis. Walby, Sylvia, op.cit., p.174.

9. Ibid., p.178

10. We have used the term `socialisation' in the sense in which Mangan has used, namely, that "socialisation may be considered to be the total process by which the culture of a community, or section of a community, is passed on from one generation and assimilated, in whole or part, by the next." Mangan concentrated essentially on the ideologies, processes and practices of formal education that shaped and were shaped by imperial values, attitudes and behaviour in Britain and its empire. See `Introduction' in J.A.Mangan (Ed): Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1988, p1-23.

11. Walby, Sylvia, op.cit., p179

12. Report on the Development of Women's Education submitted by the Director of Public Instruction - Educational G O No.578, March 23, 1929.

13. Krishna Kumar, Political Agenda of Education: A study of colonialist and nationalist ideas, Sage, New Delhi, 1991, p15.

14. A gist of the memorial has been reproduced in Home (Education) G.O. No.1334, October 31st, 1919 (Press).

15. The figures on female education that follow have been taken from the Resolution of the Government of India on Female Education - Home (Education) G.O. No.1334, October 31st, 1919 (Press).

16. Some views of the Commission have been reproduced in the Resolution cited in footnote (15) above.

17. Ibid

18. Government of India, Progress of Education in India, Quinquennial Review, 1927-32, Volumes 1 and 2, Manager of Publications, Delhi. Also quoted in Chanana, Karuna (Ed), op.cit.

19. Chanana, Karuna (ed) op.cit., p.108.

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21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. What follows has been summarized from the survey report contained in Educational G.O.No.578, March 23, 1929.

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26. Ibid.

27. The views and recommendations of the Conference of the Gazetted Women Officers of the Department have been reproduced in Educational G.O.No.578, March 23, 1929.

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32. Educational G.O. No.578, March 23, 1929.

33. Ibid

34. Ibid

35. Ibid

36. Ibid

37. Ibid

38. Letter from Sir Alfred Bourne, DPI Madras, to the Secretary to Government, Educational Department, dated March 5th 1913. - Educational G.O. No.586, June 21st 1913 (Press.)

39. Ibid

40. Home (Education) G.O. No.950, July 17, 1918.

41. Notes connected with Home (Education) G.O. Nos.1349-50, November 1st 1919.

42 (a) See `Introduction' in Altbach, P.G. and Kelly, G.P. (Eds) Education and Colonialism, Longman Inc, N.York, 1978, p1-49.
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43. Note by R.Littlehailes, Acg DPI. Ibid.

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45. Refer articles by:
(a) Preston, Jo Anne "Female aspirations and male ideology: School teaching in nineteenth century New England", and,
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47. Ibid

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- Education, Progs, Nos.117-127, December 1914, National Archives of India.

52. Ibid

53. Letter No.461 from the Finance Dept. of the Govt. of India, addressed to the Secretary of State for India, dated December 11, 1914.
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54. Note from the Govt. of India, Dept. of Education, dated August 19th 1919, No.887.
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56. See for example the letter (No.1350) from the Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary to the Govt. of India dated Nov.1st 1919.
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57. Ibid

58. Ibid. See also the discussion among the officials on the subject recorded in Notes to Home (Education) G.O. Nos.1349-50, November 1st 1919 (Press).

59. Educational G.O. No.723, October 21st 1908 (Press).

60. Ibid

61. See note under `conditions of pension'.
- Notes to Home (Education) G.O. Nos.1349-50, November 1st 1919 (Press).

62. Ibid

63. Note from the DPI dated November 20th 1913, ROC No.9323. - Educational G.O. No.125, January 29th 1914 (Press).

64. See Notes connected with Educational G.O. No.125, January 29th 1914 (Press).

65. Details taken from Public Instruction Report for 1911-12, Vol.I-II Also quoted in Educational G.O No.125, January 29th 1914 (Press).

66. Demi-Official from Sir Andrew Fraser to Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras, dated March 5th 1914.
- See notes connected with Educational G.O. Nos.614-15, May 27th 1914 (Press).

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- Notes connected with Educational G.O.Nos.614-15, May 27th 1914.

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71. Ibid

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(a) Education A, October 1906, No.31
(b) Education A, June 1910, Nos.43-44
(c) Education A, March 1911, Nos.195-199
(d) Education A, April 1911, Nos.91-111
(e) Education A, November 1911, NO.64
(f) Education A, August 1912, Nos.8-21
(g) Education A,October 1912, Nos.17-22
(h) Education A, March 1913, Nos.103-108
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(j) Education , September 1913, NO.19

73. Letter from the Government of Madras NO.998 - Educational August 22nd 1914 - Educational, Progs, October Nos.15-16, 1914, National Archives of India.

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75. Memorial dated 20th March 1914 addressed to the Government of India by the Missionary Educational Council of South India.
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77. Ibid.

78. See in this context letters from
(a) J.H. Stone, Acg DPI, Madras, to the Secretary to Government Educational Dept., dated 3rd April 1914.
(b) W.Francis, Acg. Secretary to the Government of Madras, Educational Dept. to the Secretary to the Govt of India, Dept. of Education, dated 27th May 1914.
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