



ANGLICAN SCHOLASTIC HERITAGE IN POONA 1818-1947

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ABSTRACT

Historical readings on the Anglican scholastic heritage are rather limited. Furthermore, a study of this nature focusing principally on the city of Pune, is even more difficult to find.

Heritage is all around us; it can be found in our environs, in traditional practices, in monuments, which in entirety become a part of life.

Socio-economic, cultural and religious vicissitudes and changes were observed in Pune during the colonial period from 1818-1947; however, one of the longer lasting impacts of British rule in the city, has been its educational institutions established during the above mentioned period; schools, colleges and research institutes, which have been serving the masses for over more than 150 years.

The educational legacy of these heritage monuments and traditions of Pune, gave the city the title of the 'Oxford of the East', through its schools like the Bishop's, St Mary's, St. Anne's, St. Vincent's; colleges like Deccan College, Fergusson College, Agriculture College, the University of Pune, the Wadia College and the likes.

This paper intends to bring to the fore the Anglican (religious) cum educational assemblages and set ups in Poona, between 1818-1947; these establishments in more ways than one, changed the identity of the city.

KEYWORDS: Anglican, scholastic heritage, imperial charm and architecture, City and Cantonment.

INTRODUCTION:

What is heritage? Isn't it something that is timeworn, something that is inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations?

Likewise, Pune or Poona as it was known during the British days has a unique distinction of being the carrier of the legacy of colonial architecture as well as that of

western education.

Its colonial history started when, the English East India Company was exercising control in India through political steering which metamorphosed trade into territorial control; this happened through the establishment of groundwork in the major cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

Their power was reinforced in Bengal as they strategically aligned themselves with local rulers, initially as advisors and then as an armed force to the kings who soon become dependent on the Company's military support to maintain their autonomy from neighboring rivals (Adams & Adams, 1971)^[1].

In the years that ensued, the British East India Company was seen to be on a methodical extravaganza of territorial procurement, until they finally reached the gates of Poona; the capital of the mighty Maratha Empire; they subsequently, brought the city under their sway; and put an end to the Maratha rule supplanting it with their own.

Political control brought in many changes that were seen in all spheres, social, economic and others as well.

A number of amends were witnessed in the city of Poona that came up as a result of the change of guard, essentially making the city a confluence of academics and architecture; two of the major contributions of the British rule.

Having seen several highs and low, Pune a medieval Indian city of native origin, had been wrecked several times only to rise of the ashes like a phoenix.

Pune's cosmopolitan predilection was henceforward a magnificent drapery of long-gone happenings; originally a fortified stronghold under the Bahamani's, transferred to Shivaji; when the old city centre the Kasba gained eminence. An archaic cellular city design was established by the Peshwas, as a result making it a metropolitan of paths, which represented the town of Brahmanical hegemony.

Once the British seized control, Pune acquired a two-fold character. The traditional Maharashtrian ethics and philosophies were seen in the wadas and the organized colonial set up was observed in the massive social structures, villas, parade grounds, leisure areas and market districts. Pune seemed to have two portions, one the 'city' which had a majority of the Marathi speaking habitation and 'camp' which retained its colonial uniqueness and saw the settlement of folks from around the country.

Poona has been chosen as the focus of study; because historically, while the city held the position as the capital of the Peshwas; and during the British regime, it earned a significant military status, it was also used as the Monsoon capital of the Bombay Presidency; and with its sound educational system, the city went on to be known as the 'Oxford of the East'.

The period of study, of 1818-1947, has been selected keeping in mind the period of British rule in the city.

A certain amount of work has been done on the colonial policy of education, for example, Nurullah and Naik (1951)^[2] have put together an admirable overview of education and its development in British India.

Even, Bellenoit (2007)^[3] studied the effect of missionary education on Indians highlighting the complicated nature of the relationship.

Much has also been written about how English education influenced urban

Indians (B T McCully 1960).^[4]

The architectural history of India has been represented well in the writings of Christopher Tadgell.^[5]

The articles of Christopher Benninger^[6] on the architectural and historical past of Poona have thrown light on the city's status.

Colonial structural design provided the sanctuaries of educational portals. The British left their mark on the structural monuments of the city, and it was seen everywhere.

The history of Poona, in the years post the end the Peshwa regime, until the independence of India, was witness to a number of vagaries and vicissitudes.

THE CHANGING POONA SKYLINE :

The British unfurled the Union Jack on the Shaniwarwada and brought the entire city under their sway.

Their presence also, almost divided the city into two parts- the CITY and the CANTONMENT.

The Cantonment was "British" in nature; in practice and in almost everything.

The City, on the other hand, was its, complete opposite; it even became the hub of nationalistic activities during the freedom movement.

The Cantonment existed parallel-almost- as if-oblivious of the activities in the 'City'.

Evident in the layout of the Cantonment, was a 'mini home' which the British endeavored to create.

Palpably perceptible was the distinctive synthesis of the Indo- European architecture in the residencies, schools, colleges, sports and office complexes.

The attempts of the regime to establish themselves was aided by the work of the Christian missionaries; who catered to the religious needs of the common gentry; they also provided to impart education along with health care facilities.

Thus, Poona saw the establishment of structures like churches, schools, colleges and governmental buildings that worked to provide the above mentioned needs.

The word 'Anglican' meant anything British; it also meant 'Protestant', thanks to Henry the VIIIth.

This paper intends to bring to the fore the Anglican (religious) cum educational assemblages and set ups in Poona, between 1818-1947; these establishments in more ways than one, changed the identity of the city.

The setting up of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway; the settlement of the regiments of the 17 Poona Horse, the Lancashire Fusiliers, the Maratha Light Infantry and the others, led to an increase in the population, as well as in the growth in the importance of the city on the whole; this mainly took place due to Poona, becoming the 'Monsoon capital' of the 'Governor of Bombay' thus, making Poona, one of the most important cities of the Bombay Presidency. (The residency of the Governor, later became recognized as the University of Poona)

A number of churches soon dotted the Poona skyline. The churches ministered to the religious needs of the soldiers and of the British residents. The city saw both

Catholic as well as Protestant set ups.

The root of churches in Poona dates prior to the advent of the British. The Peshwa had a number of Portuguese soldiers in his army, thus, in 1794 he donated a plot of land for the construction of the Church.

This became known as the City Church; it was consequently used by the British soldiers, who in 1887, established the Ornella's School there.

In 1835, Rev Britto, was appointed as the Military Chaplain, he in 1850, established the St. Patrick's Church, years later the St Patrick's School was established there.

Since this church became a little distant for the masses in 1860, the foundation stone of the St. Xavier's was laid, it was completed in 1864. Adjoining it came up in 1860, the St. Anne's School and seven years later the St. Vincent's School.

Since most of the Britishers were Protestants, a large number of churches to cater to their spiritual needs were constructed. The churches were typically British in architecture and indicative of the troops they catered to: Scottish, Welsh, Irish and English.

The oldest of the protestant churches was the St. Mary's Church; it had been constructed in 1825, to cater to the British officers, soldiers and their families. Alongside came up the Bishop's School in 1864 which had been established to cater to the children of warrant and non-commissioned officers. (The Principal's bungalow, is reputed to have been used by Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, the Prime Minister of England). Two years later in 1866, the St. Mary's School was founded, to provide for the education of the daughters of the officers of the British Indian army who were posted in Poona.

Soon came up the St. Paul's Church, whose foundation stone had been laid in 1867, to cater to non-officials, civilians and the Eurasian community. Along with it came the St. Paul's School, which worked as a feeder school to the Bishop's School. Also came up in the vicinity of the church, the St. Helena's School.

Another church that came up around the same time was the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1872, associated with it was the Hutching's School.

In 1885, came up the Panch Haud Tower Church or the Holy Name Church, alongside of which came up the St. Thomas School.

Along with these schools, the British also catered to the growing demands of higher education, thus came up the:-

Deccan College in 1821,

College of Engineering in 1854,

Nowrosjee Wadia College in 1932, as well as several other colleges and research institutions.

In conclusion, the Poona Cantonment stood widely in contrast with the rest of the city; with its crowd of elite colonial structures, which, even today holds its imperial charm.

The great era of educational reforms under the East India Company began after the Despatch of 1854.

The establishment of the three Universities gave stimulus for the opening up of

new colleges. Considerable attention was paid for the expansion of secondary education, government and private schools sprung up.

The schools linked with the churches continued to contribute, like the others, towards the generation of Western Educated individuals.

The British encouraged the teaching of English in schools and colleges; as they needed people to work in the administrative offices as clerks and Babus. This helped in creating a new class of people, who aided in the governance as well as in controlling the many aspects of administration in the country.

Children were sent to these schools as it was thought that it would facilitate in getting jobs in government offices.

Fresh ideas from the West like freedom, democracy, equality and brotherhood began to have its impact on the intellect of the English knowing Indians; which gave rise to national consciousness; the educated Indians now thought of freedom from the British. The rest, as you know is history.

The Anglican scholastic heritage in Poona still stands tall, as they have been witness to the myriad themes that were part of the changing times and tides of the city. These schools and colleges still run today and are doing well for themselves.

Thus, in inference one can say, 'Poona' proudly holds high its epithet, 'Oxford of the East' - a legacy, it has long carried.

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