

# Colleges and Kings

## Higher Education under Direct and Indirect Rule

*Educational institutions established both by the British authorities and the Indian rajas are often compared and a distinction is then made between 'native' and 'colonial' modernity. 'Indian' educational institutions are assumed to be at loggerheads with those set up by the British. While comparisons between princely states or between princely states and the activities of the British government in India are commonplace, this article attempts to compare the activities of Indian authorities within and without British India, with specific reference to their educational endeavours. It also brings into view one of the oldest territories of British India – the Northern Circars.*

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Mysore and Baroda were “unhappy with extensive illegal colonial intervention, failed promises of deliverance, and their own insecurities, resisted colonial control by actively reconstituting within the inner political sphere a ‘native’ modernity, which in turn subsumed the social and cultural realms”.<sup>1</sup> This, according to Manu Bhagavan, was the driving force behind the movement towards higher education in the princely states of Mysore and Baroda, which culminated in the founding of Mysore University in 1916 and Maharaja Sayaji Rao’s University at Baroda in 1949.<sup>2</sup>

Colleges and kings were two sides of the same coin from the outset of “western” education in India. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether the rajas “resisted colonial control”, or rather avoided or emulated it. Education played a major role in the policies of the rajas of princely states in the 19th and 20th centuries. Their governments were motivated by a desire to oversee the instruction of candidates for their administrative staff, on the one hand, and to respond, on the other hand, to demands by various pressure groups in society. Were there competing strategies and aspirations in the administration policies of British India and the princely states? Did the rajas attempt to educate their own subjects in order to resist colonial control and become independent of British educational resources? Can we assume that in the cases of Mysore and Baroda and other princely states (e.g. Travancore and Hyderabad) education was part of a “native” modernity directed – as Bhagavan holds – first and foremost at one’s own subjects? In this paper we will investigate whether Bhagavan’s hypothesis holds true that the opposition between “native” and “colonial” modernity is indeed congruent with the boundary between princely states and British India. It is, of course, clear that competition has always existed between the various institutions in the field of education, and that it could easily develop into political confrontation should the powers behind them be at loggerheads. It is not our intention here to explore the rivalries created by the independence movement, or communalist or regional sentiments.

Instead, we propose looking at the divide between British India and the princely states from the angle of latent similarities. While comparisons between princely states or between princely states and the activities of the British government in India are commonplace, ours introduces two new aspects. First, there is an

attempt to compare the activities of Indian authorities within and without British India. Such an attempt, to our knowledge, has never been made before. Second, it brings into view one of the oldest territories of British India, namely, the Northern Circars. This region is usually neglected in the discussion of the British colonial agenda. Thus, we compare districts from the northern margins of the Madras presidency with a princely state: Travancore. We will examine the history of “Indian” educational institutions on both sides of the dividing line, i.e., institutions of higher education sponsored by Indian rulers in the princely states and by zamindars in British India. The paper links the question of agency in this field with colonial categories of direct and indirect rule, slots into which rajas have been placed according to historical coincidence rather than by design.

### Strategies, Categories and Methods

Traditional Indian kings under British direct rule usually became known as zamindars, whereas those under indirect rule were categorised as ruling princes. The latter’s internal sovereignty implied the responsibility of the rajas in the field of education. They were in a position to introduce their ideas to the somewhat elitist discourse on higher education that was prevalent in the UK and brought to India by the British. Zamindars were not in possession of such rights and, if at all, could only intervene sporadically. However, they too felt the need to establish and support institutions of higher education, both within their sphere of influence as well as at other significant locations, since the esteem of the rajas and zamindars amongst each other and in the eyes of their subjects was dependent on this aspect for ‘dharmic’ rulership. The discrepancy in status attributed to the ruling rajas and zamindars by the British resulted in disparate strategies to gain prestige and/or political acclaim through the support of educational institutions. In the case of the ruling princes, the ruler himself led the chain of command, whereas direct rule by the British empire placed zamindars close to the bottom of the scale. In this situation, the latter’s strategic measures to achieve traditional prestige were closely linked to the amount of income that could be allotted to private sponsorship. How did traditional rulers classified in these two categories deal with the conditions they found under British paramountcy?

In order to keep the argument short, we intend to utilise an education model whereby the entire institution of education is treated as a mental construct dominated by the paramount power and challenged by various interest groups. We would like to construct this field as a “black box” into which the various demands and perceptions of the different groups are fed and from which the political and ideological output of the process results. We will not expound on any implicit notions derived from social and cultural categories in force in the field of education, but simply accept them as given and active within the black box. In this way, the complex field of interrelations can be reduced to an input/output model, with the advantage that the historical content of our terminology does not have to be explained. This enables us to use the model for various processes of contest at different times and under various political conditions.

We reduced the input to three types, namely, the preconditions set by the British, the preconditions and interests of Indian rulers, and finally, the demands expressed by the populace. The results created in the black box are much more complex than the inputs and are cast in a typology under the heading of “modernity”<sup>3</sup> in the sense of Manu Bhagavan. This allows us to use Bhagavan’s terminology to distinguish between “colonial”, “native”, and “national” modernity. “Colonial” modernity coincides with British expectations of modern education. British preconditions are often very vaguely summarised under “good governance”, which in the course of application (re)produce “good governance”. For native rulers, whose prestige and status depended on the correct performance of “good governance”, modernity could also have meant the ability to control the education of their own subjects. For them, the main issue was to control the various curricula. According to the premise ‘nam et ipsa scientia potestas est’ (Sir Francis Bacon), the rajas were interested in defying British educational efforts by creating a spirit of “national” and/or “native” modernity. The focus of their interest was not the British administration but the raja himself and his kingdom. According to Bhagavan, the content of these two notions of modernity was almost identical. The goal of higher education was to give state subjects adequate education to enable them to fulfil their duty as administrators and members of the professions. The impact of this modernity, however, was to be twofold. It aimed first of all at perpetuating the colonial state of mind, and secondly, at creating a non-British modernity.

Modernity is, among other things, an opportunity for individual social mobility outside the established paths of tradition. It thus entails the likelihood of competition for privileges. Those who already hold privileges have to face being challenged by non-entities. In the case of colonial India, the administrations of both the British and the rajas were keen to utilise this new social mobility for their modernisation agendas. Apart from the British and the princes, other newly-established groups with their own visions of the future came into existence at that time. The latter worked with modern ideas, but pursued an agenda of their own that was incongruent with raja’s and British interests and could be subsumed under the heading of “national” modernity. This category is, however, too heterogeneous to be included for discussion within the scope of this paper. Specific educational institutions that are expressly communalistic, traditionalist-modern (neo-Hinduist) or secular-nationalist, as for example, Gurukuls, Muslim madrasas and alternative educational institutions within the nationalist freedom movement (Santiniketan), will, therefore, be excluded here.

In the princely states and British India, the politically active or politically conscious section of the population was confronted with all three modernity agendas, and it can be assumed that those with anti-British inclinations were able to select their own segmented picture of modernity from the spheres of “native” and “national” modernity, depending on their interests. One example is the Orissa movement, in which a coalition of anti-British and pro-Oriya national modernity held together until such time as the Oriya nationalist pressure group saw their demands fulfilled in British India with the establishment of the province of Orissa in 1936. From then on conservative Oriya nationalists, such as the big zamindars and traditional elites, sided with the British, while the general populace remained with the Indian National Congress or the Communist Party in their struggle for national freedom and independence. It was only when this formation emerged that the princely states of Orissa, for the most part bystanders in the struggle until then, came under massive attack from the nationalist side.<sup>4</sup> The situation in Travancore was similarly complex but with more transparent opposition between the princely state and the British government. Here, we have several anti-British interest groups. Some supported the Maharaja’s quest for an independent state, others stood for Indian national integration but were not necessarily against a continuation of Maharajan rule, while the most radical, anti-monarchist wing fought for the integration of Travancore into a larger, Malayalam-speaking federal state in a united India.

### Case Studies: Travancore and the Northern Circars

Since our examples are situated in the context of the Madras presidency, we will give a short summary of the history of higher education in South India before going into the details of the case studies. As criticised by the authors of the chapter on ‘English Education’ in *The History and Culture of the Indian People (HCIP)* 10/II,<sup>5</sup> the Madras presidency was far behind other provinces with respect to founding colleges. Prior to 1840, the Madras government had shown no interest in higher education apart from establishing a few special schools, such as a medical college and a survey school. Other attempts at higher European educational institutions were shortlived and education in general consisted either of traditional Sanskrit and vernacular learning or was in the hands of Christian missionaries. The first college to be established was the Madras Presidency College, founded in 1840 and supplemented by two subsidiary schools some years before the inauguration of Madras University (1857).<sup>6</sup> By 1884, the number of first-grade colleges within the presidency had reached 10, of which all but one were government colleges. Of the 20 second-grade colleges, 19 were non-government institutions.<sup>7</sup> The ratio of government to private colleges was then 1 to 2. By 1902, the number of colleges had grown to 15 first-grade colleges and 39 second-grade colleges.<sup>8</sup> In 1913, the British Indian government decided to establish more universities in British India, in order to secure “a separate university for each of the leading provinces in India, and secondly, to create new local teaching and residential universities within each of the provinces in harmony with the best modern opinion as to the right road to educational efficiency”.<sup>9</sup> A second university in the Madras presidency was founded in 1926 (Andhra University) to meet a demand by the Telugu-speaking population for their own university. Prior to this date, two universities had been established in the neighbouring states of Mysore (1916) and Hyderabad

(1918). The only other universities established before independence in South India were located in Nagpur (1923), Annamalainagar (1928), Travancore (1937) and Bhubaneswar (1943).

In 1904, Madras University not only controlled college education within the presidency, but also in Coorg, Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Ceylon. Of the 61 colleges under the jurisdiction of the Madras presidency in that year, only 10 were financed completely by the Madras government.<sup>10</sup> Fifty-five of the colleges were art colleges that provided general education. Of these, 15 were classified as first-grade, and 40 as second-grade colleges. Three of the first-grade colleges were maintained by the government, while all others were managed by private agencies, such as the Maharaja's College at Vizianagaram to mention but one. With the exception of this college, all of them received government subsidies<sup>11</sup> illustrating that there was little chance of deviating from British education policy without losing recognition as a suitable educational institution that provided students with British curricula and certificates.

Against this background we will now illustrate the cases of Travancore and Northern Andhra, which are parallel in as much as their education policies met the demand of the population and at the same time functioned as a strategy of the rajas and zamindars. By funding a university in the kingdom, Travancore endeavoured to gain control of the colleges on its territory that were previously under the jurisdiction of Madras University, while Vizianagaram invested money in the colleges on its territory as well as in the universities outside the Madras presidency.

Travancore was one of the key princely states in India, with a sizeable area of more than 7,625 square miles.<sup>12</sup> The royal family was among the most progressive ruling families in India. Although the colonial government continuously monitored the state for "good governance", it rarely interfered in its education policy. The Travancore government had all the incentives required to pursue a modern education policy, i.e. sufficient sources at hand and an interested public that expressed its demands for modern education before the raja.<sup>13</sup> At the turn of the 20th century, there was a high degree of compatibility between the agenda of the raja, who was keen to free Travancore from British influence as far as possible, and that of the people, who demanded education for all. The raja was concerned with finding staff for his administration among his own subjects, with promoting industry, and in general sought to make Travancore fit for competition with other industrialised countries in the modern world. This policy of "using education as a catalyst"<sup>14</sup> seems to have suited a large section of the population in Travancore. It promised lucrative employment, a venue for social uplift, and the perpetuation of the old maritime and trade tradition of Travancore.<sup>15</sup>

Rani Parvati Bai's proclamation of 1817 is the first extant document in which a ruler of Travancore expressed an opinion on education policy.<sup>16</sup> However, the establishment of European style schools was mainly in the hands of mission societies during most of the 19th century. The Travancore government played an active role in certain cases during that time – the highlight being the establishment of the Maharaja's College in 1866, which had been founded in 1834 as His Highness the Maharaja's Free School in Thiruvananthapuram. A college boom can be observed between 1866 and 1889: in these two decades, eight colleges were established in Travancore, followed by another wave of college foundations in the 1920s.<sup>17</sup> The Maharaja and the

government granted scholarships to students and fee concessions to the poorer sections of society.<sup>18</sup> The establishment and maintenance of libraries and reading rooms, the Napier Museum, an art gallery, an observatory, an educational museum and bureau, and a department for the preservation and publication of Sanskrit and Malayalam documents as "quasi-educational institutions" met with the raja's benevolence.<sup>19</sup> Two public libraries existed in Thiruvananthapuram as far back as 1038 ME (1862/63 AD). In 1092 ME (1917/18 AD), 37 libraries and reading rooms received grants from the Travancore government, and in 1110 ME (1934/35 AD) a scheme for establishing a central circulating library and 60 libraries throughout Travancore was approved and put into practice in the following year.<sup>20</sup>

It was only at the end of the 19th century that the rajas regarded education a field deserving of systematic support. A restructuring of the public instruction system in Travancore resulted in the passing of the Education Code in 1910.<sup>21</sup> It set rules for textbooks, curricula, school hours and other topics related to the running of schools, and introduced compulsory primary schooling free of charge. The numerous schools run along western lines that were established in most parts of Travancore became the mainstream system and the example to be followed.

Compared to England and British India, Travancore fared rather well with respect to the number of students in relation to the general population. Whereas a sixth of the population in England went to school in the late 1920s, in British India only one in every 24 inhabitants was a student. In contrast to British India, an eighth of the population attended school in Travancore at any given time.<sup>22</sup> In 1943, the male literacy rate in Travancore had already reached 50 per cent, the female literacy rate 38 per cent.<sup>23</sup> The state invested about one-fifth of its budget in education with the intention of improving the quality of education and raising the standard of living for teachers.<sup>24</sup>

As a further step towards educational reforms, the idea of founding a university became a topic of public debate. The engagement of the Travancore government with higher education can be seen most clearly in the process of founding a university in Travancore. The University Commission had its first session in 1917, followed by a series of other meetings, before finally coming to the conclusion that a university was necessary if the demands of both society and the government were to be met. After about two decades of commission work and parliamentary debates, Bala Rama Varma Maharaja of Travancore issued a royal proclamation establishing the university on his 25th birthday on 16 Tulam 1113 ME (November 1, 1937) and introducing a government education scheme.<sup>25</sup> The university opened officially in March 1938<sup>26</sup> and was included "in the list of Indian Universities approved by the Governor General in council for competitive examinations conducted under the authority of the government of India" in 1940.<sup>27</sup> The founding of Travancore University was a major prestige issue with the Travancore government. The annual university convocations were usually celebrated in conjunction with the raja's birthday in November, as was the case at the founding ceremony.<sup>28</sup>

Several reasons led to the foundation of the university in Travancore, the most important of which was the desire to be independent from the Madras University in the British Madras presidency, to resist the colonial control of education, to establish a university within the Malayalam-speaking region, and, according to the dewan of Travancore, C P Ramaswami Aiyar (1879-1966), to provide an institution where all communities could

study in the industrial, agricultural and commercial fields and take an active part in the industrialisation of Travancore.<sup>29</sup>

C P Ramaswami Aiyar's shining example was Nalanda, the first Buddhist university near Bodhgaya, which "fulfilled the object of every University, as it enabled students to form each other's character, made them learn the art of life and enabled them to constitute a harmonious society."<sup>30</sup> In his view, everyone should have access to education and study at the expense of the government; in this respect C P Ramaswami Aiyar took the Human Rights Declaration as his model.<sup>31</sup> The Dewan of Travancore's educational ideals were thus behind the establishment of the University of Travancore: "Education, in other words, must help us to get rid of all provincialism, communal and racial prejudices and superstitions. It must raise us above racial, political and religious antagonisms and socialise our instincts".<sup>32</sup> This modernising agenda expresses the official state policy towards education and knowledge, and hints at its wish to create a national sentiment based on a common identity of all the king's subjects. Such a modern state with its generalised Malayali identity needed national solidarity beyond the traditional boundaries of class and caste and emphasised the cultural traditions of Kerala and their validity in the context of a modern nation.

Another motivation for establishing a separate university in Travancore was to avoid immediate control by the British administration of curricula and the student way of life. A university situated in the capital of Thiruvananthapuram would emphasise independent decisions regarding curricula and thereby the foci of research and learning. One problem for students from colleges outside the Madras presidency applying for courses at Madras University was the advantage of the latter over the former: students from colleges outside the presidency were less likely to be accepted by Madras University than those from colleges within the presidency. The Travancore government was intent on providing equal opportunities for their students.<sup>33</sup> The Travancore royal family not only supported higher education in their own state, but also engaged themselves in universities founded in the presidencies, either as administrative divisions or as alternatives to the central universities. They in turn received honorary degrees, for instance, from Andhra University, Benares Hindu University and Annamalai University.<sup>34</sup>

While the Travancore government aimed at Travancore becoming a fully independent state, the ruling elites of northern Andhra were more interested in being recognised as modern members of a landed gentry in the British fashion. At the same time, they continued to claim to be traditional rulers in keeping with Indian ideas of statehood. Investment in education here had the effect of enhancing the personal prestige of the zamindar, as mentioned above, or any member of this elite. In contrast to Travancore, no recognised traditional overlord had emerged in this area since the retreat of the Mughals in 1707. Claims for higher status were first articulated through the patronage of temples and traditional arts, and in the last resort through warfare. After the pacification of the area, the British forced the zamindars to abolish their armies.

The Northern Circars<sup>35</sup> made up the largest part of the Madras presidency under the Zamindari settlement. From 1765 until 1794 a strange combination of British East India Company's (EIC) overlordship and the almost independent rule of several local rajahs coexisted. This political vacuum was used by the Pusapati family of Vizianagaram<sup>36</sup> to continue to carve out a state which finally comprised most of what is now coastal Andhra Pradesh, north of the Godavari river, and much of southern Orissa. This polity,

which was larger than most of the later princely states, had to be subjugated by force and broken into several parts in 1794 in order to render it suitably amenable to play the role the British EIC had designed for it: that of a zamindari.<sup>37</sup> Other kingdoms in the area, while less active, shared a similar fate and became "settled" as zamindaris: the largest among them were Pettapuram, Parlakimedi and Jeypore. Even after the downfall of the Pusapatis, the EIC administration allowed the kings a fairly large amount of internal freedom, which they used to continue to display the usual symbols of traditional Hindu rulership. While being politically and militarily impotent after 1794, this arrangement allowed the rulers of the area to continue their roles as traditional kings with almost no interference from British authorities, as long as "good governance" was upheld. Most of the zamindaris were able to maintain a stable level of administrative success from approximately 1850 onwards. Prior to this date, there was a gap of one or two generations between their disarmament and first encounter with British administration and the emergence of competent administrators from within the ruling families. This period of transition was marked by passivity and administrative neglect.

Most successful in the attempt to "modernise" their realms were the Pusapatis of Vizianagaram and Pettapuram.<sup>38</sup> Education played a major role in these efforts. This has long been described by local historians<sup>39</sup> who could rely on oral tradition and local archives, but no attempt at systematically describing the situation has ever been made.<sup>40</sup>

During the second-half of the 19th century, the rulers of Vizianagaram regained much of their status and were the most prominent "modernising" force in the area, and the founders and supporters of institutions of traditional and western learning. In the field of traditional learning, the introduction of a Sanskrit college (Vijayarama Gajapati Raju III, 1860) and a music college (Vijayarama Gajapati Raju IV, 1919) should be mentioned.<sup>41</sup> During the reign of Vizianagaram Raju III (1848-1978), the following institutions of higher education received donations: Vizianagaram High School, Allahabad University, Aligarh Muhammedan College, Carmichael Library, Benares, the Oxford Indian Institute, Queen's College, Benares, Calcutta University (scholarships), and engineering scholarships in Madras, Roorkee and Calcutta.<sup>42</sup> During the Ananda Gajapati Raju (1879-1897) period, the Vizianagaram High School was elevated to one of the 10 first-grade colleges in Madras. Ananda Gajapati Raju not only funded Max Mueller's publication of *Rigveda*, the *Vacaspati Sanskrit Dictionary* and the *Vizianagaram Sanskrit Series*, but was interested in the upkeep of religious institutions at central holy places, such as Benares and Ramesvaram.

Around 1900, two first-grade and four second-grade colleges existed in the Northern Circars between the river Godavari and the Bengal presidency border.

Once the educational system in the Vizianagaram Zamindari had been established, the family's interest in education shifted to the field of educational politics. Along with other zamindars in the Telugu-speaking areas of the Circars, they supported the Andhra movement that aimed at a separate Telugu-speaking province. The ruling zamindars supported learned societies such as the Andhra Historical Research Society and took a keen interest in the foundation of Andhra University. In 1913, initial demands for a separation of the Telugu-speaking districts from the jurisdiction of Madras University were raised. When this demand finally materialised in the form of Andhra University in 1926,<sup>43</sup>

the latter received donations from all over coastal Andhra. Vikrama Deo Varma (1869-1951), the king of Jeypore in Orissa became the biggest private benefactor.<sup>44</sup> Other major donors from the Northern Circars were the rulers of Vizianagaram and Kurupam. Notable contributions from outside the area came from the Raja of Travancore and the Nizam of Hyderabad.

We see, for instance, in the case of the Vizianagaram rajas that the British honoured them in particular for supporting British educational institutions in the British territories throughout India in education areas as diverse as editing the Rigveda – perceived as “traditional” – and granting scholarships to engineering students – perceived as “modern”.

The establishment of higher education institutions in Travancore state and the northern Madras presidency border region were in many aspects structurally and temporarily simultaneous. The ruling elites in both cases were interested in establishing educational institutions essentially detached from the education policy centre in Madras. In both cases “good governance” determined how the raja and the zamindars approached the problem of education respectively. The rajas of Travancore and the intellectual elite of the Northern Circars were motivated by the desire to integrate specific regional features into their education policy. In the case of Travancore, this meant – under the broad agenda of creating an independent state – concentration on Malayali identity and the ability of Malayalis to retain their traditional strength in the fields of maritime commerce and agricultural and industrial production. In the case of Andhra, education was to a large extent connected to regional culture, particularly the Telugu renaissance and the Oriya movement, as well as to attempts by zamindars to integrate both movements into the cultural identity of the region. In doing so they employed traditional factors such as temples and regional pilgrimage centres besides modern institutions such as colleges and universities. After 1930, they did not oppose the division of the area and the respective creation of Telugu and Oriya territories and educational institutions. Both in Travancore and in the Andhra region, the solidarity between the populace and the rulers did not diminish during the language and independence movements in their regions. Both areas were interested in fostering cultural identity by making the population independent of “foreign” educational institutions, which in both cases culminated in the foundation of universities in Thiruvananthapuram, Vishakapatnam (Waltair), and, for the Oriyas, in Bhubaneswar. In the case of Thiruvananthapuram and Vishakapatnam, the universities were an expression of their emancipation from Madras University. In all of these cases, learned societies were founded to reinforce the historical consciousness of their “own” history, a major factor in “modern” regional identity as produced in these new

**Table 1: Colleges in the Northern Circars North of the River Godavari around 1900**

Town	Grade	Maintained by	Other Donors
Berhampur	Second grade	Madras government, later Raja of Khallikote	
Kakinada	Second grade	Madras government	Raja of Pithapuram
Parlakimedi	Second grade	Raja of Parlakimedi	
Rajamandri	First grade	Madras government	
Visakhapatnam	Second grade	Private foundation	Raja of Bobbili, Raja of Vizianagaram
Vizianagaram	First grade	Raja of Vizianagaram	

Source: Imperial Gazetteer of India, Madras Presidency.

institutions of education. This modernity based on generalised, quasi-national identities was later to come into conflict with the all-India national independence movement, separated itself from the raja as the figure of integration and was now based on nation, territory and state. Whereas many of the ruling elites remained firmly rooted in their particularist traditions, the majority of the population saw their future in the greater national context of an independent India as propagated by the Indian National Congress that embraced the idea that “India is one”.

### Travancore, Northern Circars and Problem of “Modernity”

The case studies lead us back to the questions raised at the beginning of the paper. At least in part, there were competing agendas in the administration policies of British India and the princely states. This does not, however, imply that a sense of agreement on the direction of education policy prevailed in the Madras presidency. The members of the native population who had the means to create alternative ways of modernity did so either by funding schools, colleges, and even universities as private individuals, or by taking recourse to traditional status in an attempt to become active players in the field of education.

Manu Bhagavan’s categorical distinction between “native” and “western” modernity is not verified in our comparison of the education policies of a princely state and part of the Madras presidency. Travancore and Vizianagaram appear at least to be quite different from Mysore and Baroda. Our case studies suggest a combined existence of “native tradition” and “western modernity”. “Western modernity” can mean two things: firstly, modernity in a technological sense, including knowledge and the utilisation of science and technology at a similar level to the west, and secondly, modernity in the sense of supporting the quest for a modern habitus and modern state structures. Here we find that the strategy of the ruling prince is aimed at his own

**Table 2: Dates of Foundation of the Five Oldest Universities in India and Others in the South**

Year of Incorporation	Location/Name	A	B	C	D
1857	Calcutta Bombay Madras				x
1887	Allahabad			x	x
1916	Benares Hindu University <sup>a</sup> Mysore <sup>b</sup>			x	
1918	Hyderabad, Osmania University <sup>c</sup>	x			
1921	Aligarh Muslim University <sup>d</sup>			x	
1926	Waltair, Andhra University	x		x	x <sup>i</sup>
1928/9	Chidambaram, Annamalai University <sup>e</sup>	x		- <sup>f</sup>	-
1937	Thiruvananthapuram, University of Travancore <sup>g</sup>			-	-
1943	Bhubaneswar, Utkal University <sup>h</sup>			x <sup>k</sup>	x <sup>l</sup>

Notes: A – Donations received from Travancore; B – Stipends granted by Travancore; C – Donations received from Vizianagaram/other zamindars of Northern Circars; D – Stipends granted by Vizianagaram/other zamindars of Northern Circars.

(a) Private foundation. (b) First university outside the domain of British administration in India. (c) First university to offer instruction in an Indian language (Urdu). (d) Originally Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College (founded 1875). (e) Private foundation. (f) No data after 1929. (g) Now called Kerala University. (h) Founded during chief ministership of K C Gajapati, Maharaja of Parlakimedi. (i) Stipends for Oriya students from zamindar of Jeypore. (k) No data for Vizianagaram after 1929. (l) Donations by Jeypore.

independence from colonial rule, whereas in the zamindar case there is a strong tendency towards integration in the British empire as equal citizens. "Native" modernity is found only in institutions with the express aim of providing a "counter" image of modernity. This hybrid idea leads to an alternative education that culminates in establishments such as the gurukul.<sup>45</sup> However, these phenomena did not exist in south India, at least not at that time.

The differences established between "native" and "western" attitudes towards modernity do not coincide with the boundary lines of the British presidencies and their native state neighbours. Instead, it seems that perceptions of modernity were very much dependent on the scope of the action of a ruler who had to pursue his own ideas on education. In all cases, British education policy and general norms for "good governance" determined the amount of agency left to individual rulers to decide how to spend their state income in the field of education.

We saw how spending money on education became a general phenomenon in the 19th and early 20th century.<sup>46</sup> Differences in strategy and outcome were the consequence of available funds as well as of the political situation in which the ruler found himself, both in relation to the British administration and to the demands of his own public. We find that there are far more parallels and attempts to imitate a successful model than there are differences, both in the princely states and in British India. The ideas and concepts of "modern" education are basically the same all over the subcontinent. At times it seems that "native rulers" are even more "modern" than their British counterparts, especially taking into account the extent to which the British administration neglected education, in complete disregard of their express intentions and policies. Supporting "modern" or "traditional" education could bring rulers a different kind of prestige. In both cases the public appreciated the raja's interest in the public benefit to be gained by his benevolence. In a society like India where the traditional ruler as dharmaraja was required to spend his resources on the support of scholarly learning, literature, the performing arts and, now, in the modern sense, public education, the transition from the old principle of the dharmaraja to that of "good governor" was an easy one. The support of both "traditional" and "modern" education enhanced a ruler's prestige in the eyes of his subjects, but only "modern" education was able to provide the know-how to become active within the political framework of colonial India, the independence movement, and the modern world beyond.

Besides aiming at traditional prestige and status in the eyes of their peers and subjects, the education policies of the native rulers also had a "modern" agenda. As already mentioned, the "good governance" required by the British included the field of education and gave rulers the opportunity to show that their own administration was more efficient than that of the British. Moreover, our data shows that there was also an interest in breaking the monopoly of British university education, which came into existence with the foundation of the presidential universities in 1857, and the system of affiliated colleges. It is significant that neither Travancore nor Vizianagaram made donations to the presidency universities but granted stipends for their subjects to study there, while on the other hand taking a keen interest in the establishment of alternative institutions such as the universities of Annamalai, Benares, Allahabad, Mysore, and Vishakapatnam. We must also consider that the zamindar of Vizianagaram did not donate money for the establishment of universities in princely states, whereas the raja of Travancore did. In the case of Vizianagaram, this policy was most probably based on the fact that

they did not acknowledge the difference in legal status between the princely states and themselves, and therefore did not regard it as in their interest to enhance the status of these territories.

## Conclusion

In the eyes of the British administration, education required the dissemination of the principles formulated during the period of enlightenment in Europe, when education was seen as a means of uplifting the nation. The aim was to raise the level of knowledge and general education, so that interested parties could draw from a reservoir of trained workers and state administrators. The British kept their hands on the field of education throughout the subcontinent through their system of college affiliation to certain universities. As long as education policies were based on these general principles, the activity of a ruler in the field of education was tolerated, at times even supported by the colonial administration. There was no distinction between British and "native" interests in this respect.

The founding of and donations to educational institutions was generally associated with the interest of the donors to provide better access to education for their "own" subjects. This investment in the education of one's "own" subjects may even have been motivated by a certain anti-British attitude, insofar as it was a means of criticising the slow and often inefficient implementation of higher education outside the centres of the British raj. It should also be taken into account, however, that these investments can also be understood as measures to enhance the ruler's own status in the eyes of his subjects and neighbours, since education policy was one of the few remaining fields where a ruler could demonstrate a certain amount of independence.

Is there still room for the concept of "native" modernity after our analysis? One could construct such a term in contrast to "colonial" modernity with its typical 19th century "rationality", based on scientific myths such as race, nation, and progress. By describing "colonial" modernity in this way, we are leaving room to distinguish between the different analytical categories that have been used in various combinations. "Colonial" modernity is based on "rational" administration and uses this basis to deal with "western" methods of teaching and canon of education. It is therefore "western" in its form, content, and outlook. "Western" modernity emerged in the 18th century and began to dominate European education as it emancipated itself from traditional structures and was taken over by modern nation states. When these newly-developed modern ideas of education were transferred to India, they began – after an initial dormant period – to develop their typical late 19th century colonial habitus.<sup>47</sup>

"Modern" here ideally means that education was accessible not on the grounds of status and caste, but on the "modern" principles of class and wealth. Only where administrators were interested in opening up the education system was a "truly democratic" system introduced under the principle of education for all. This "modern" form of schooling was expected to transmit modern ideas to a major section of society. However, it rapidly became evident that modern forms of schooling could also be used as a vehicle for traditionalist notions of modernity or revolutionary ideas, considered among the ruling elites to be subversive.

As one particular form, "national" modernity developed implicitly as a result of British instructions, the policy of the ruler, and the demands of the population for higher education, since this process promoted an awareness of statehood. The demand for

independence could be seen as a consequence of this process. “Native”, “national”, and “colonial” modernity did not develop entirely separate from each other, but at times in parallel, interlinked processes. Seen from some distance in time, we now see that these modernities are not mutually exclusive. Since they are based on common forms of reasoning, they need the other as a counterpart against the background of which their supporters make up their own identity. **FW**

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## Notes

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- 1 Manu Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, p 8.
- 2 Prior to 1949 Baroda University was a college whose elevation to the status of university had been planned since 1908. Bhagavan, p 122.
- 3 We understand “modernity” in the sense of Koselleck, Reinhart: ‘The Eighteenth Century as the Beginning of Modernity’ in Reinhart Koselleck (ed), *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2002, pp 154-69.
- 4 Nivedita Mohanti, *Oriya Nationalism: Quest for a United Orissa, 1866-1930*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1982. We quote this incident because it is the background against which education policy was developed in the Vizianagaram zamindari, one of our examples.
- 5 R C Majumdar; K K Datta; V N Datta, ‘English Education’ in R C Majumdar (ed), *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol 10/II: British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1965, p 74. See also the *Educational Memorandum* by Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, 1872: “Owing to various causes, education had begun in Madras some five and twenty years later than in Bengal, and later also than in Bombay. Therefore, even if funds had been fully available, there was still the serious want of an educated class, sufficiently strong in numbers to influence popular opinion, or to supply the agency which would be required for the direction, inspection, and executive of any really comprehensive system of popular education. The government of Madras, Sir Charles Trevelyan being then at its head, was altogether opposed to compulsory taxation for educational purposes, and so the question of introducing an education rate was postponed for the time” (OIOC: R/2 (879/3). For a sketch history of education in the Madras presidency, see C D Maclean, Vol 1, p 565, footnote 2.
- 6 Cuddalore and Rajamandry. C D Maclean, *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*, Asian Educational Services, 1987, New Delhi, (reprint of 1885 edition), Vol 1, pp 571-72 footnote.
- 7 C D Maclean, *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*, Asian Educational Services 1987, New Delhi (reprint of 1885 edition), Vol 1, p 579.
- 8 Report of Indian Universities Commission, quoted in R C Majumdar (ed), *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol 10/II: British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1965, p 74.
- 9 R C Majumdar (ed), *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol 11: Struggle for Freedom, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1969, p 880.
- 10 *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Provincial Series, Madras, Usha Publications, New Delhi, 1985 (reprint of 1908 edition), Vol 1, p 119.
- 11 *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Provincial Series, Madras, Usha Publications, New Delhi, 1985 (reprint of 1908 edition), Vol 1, p 120.
- 12 Travancore was ranked among the second-highest group of states in which maharajas were entitled to a 19 gun-shot salute, Maclean, Vol 2, p 468.
- 13 This policy has been quite successful, as is evident from the literacy rate of 90.9 per cent in today’s Kerala, and the number of students at institutions for higher education. Cf. Census of India 2001, T 00-006: Number of Literates and Literacy Rate by Sex, www.censusindia.net/t\_00\_006.html [available on 08/09/04].

- 14 A Mathew, *A History of Educational Development in Kerala*, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, 1987, p 83.
- 15 On the predominant role of education for the uplift of economic status and social change see Margret Frenz, ‘Competing Ideas: The Quest for Knowledge in Early 20th Century Travancore’ in Krishna Kumar, Jochen Oesterheld (eds), *Education in Modern South Asia: Social Change and Political Implications*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2004.
- 16 “In order that there might be no backwardness in the spread of enlightenment among them, that by diffusion of education they might become better subjects and public servants, and that the reputation of the state might be advanced thereby”, University of Kerala, 1963, p 4.
- 17 University College was founded in 1866 (originally His Highness the Maharaja’s College of Science), Government Arts College in 1866 (originally His Highness the Maharaja’s College of Arts), Government Law College in 1875 (originally The Law College), College of Fine Arts in 1888, Government Sanskrit College in 1889 (originally The Sanskrit College), Government Ayurveda College in 1889 (originally Ayurvedic Patasala), The Training College, His Highness the Maharaja’s College for Women. The founding of Christian colleges should also be taken into account: CMS College Kottayam in 1840, Scott Christian College Nagercoil in 1893, Union Christian College Aluva in 1921, St Berchmans College Changanassery in 1922. The 1950/1960s and 1990s produced two further waves of college foundations.
- 18 Travancore Administration Report 1107 ME/1931-1932 AD [Seventy-Sixth Annual Report], Government Press, Trivandrum, 1933, pp 222, 223.
- 19 T K Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, Vol III: Economic Affairs, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1996 (reprint of 1940 edition), p 749. Travancore Administration Report 1107 ME/1931-1932 AD [Seventy-Sixth Annual Report], Government Press, Trivandrum, 1933, p 225.
- 20 Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, Vol III, p 742.
- 21 See Travancore Education Code, Trivandrum 1910. See also T K Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, 4 Vols, Vol 3, Economic Affairs, Trivandrum, 1940, p 718.
- 22 See Travancore Administration Report 1105 ME/1929-1930 AD [Seventy-Fourth Annual Report], Government Press, Trivandrum, 1931, p 200; Philip Hartog, Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Commission (Review of Growth of Education in British India by the Auxiliary Committee appointed by the Commission), His Majesty’s Stationery Office, London, 1929, pp 288, 305.

1929-30	England	British India	Travancore
Square miles	58,000	1,100,000	7,625
Population	36,000,000	247,000,000	4,000,000
Schools	34,000	200,000	3,641
Students	6,000,000	10,000,000	5,668,703

- 23 From the agent to the governor general, Madras States, No FR15/43, 8.1943 (OIOC: R/1/1/3927 [6(5)-P(S)/1943]).
- 24 Travancore Administration Reports 1105 to 1123 reveal that the yearly budget for education was 20 per cent. See Travancore Administration Report 1105 ME/1929-1930 AD [Seventy-Fourth Annual Report], Government Press, Trivandrum, 1931 to Travancore Administration Report 1123 ME/1947-1948 AD [Ninety Second Annual Report], Government Press, Trivandrum, 1949.
- 25 From the agent to the governor general, Madras States, No FR21/37, 16.11.1937 (OIOC: R/1/1/2912).
- 26 From the agent to the governor general, Madras States, No FR21/37, 16.11.1937: “The formal opening of the Travancore University is expected to take place at a public function to be held about the first week of March 1938 by which time the organisation, personnel and programme of work of the university will be complete. Representatives of other universities will, it is understood, be invited for the inauguration ceremony” (OIOC: R/1/1/2912).
- 27 From the agent to the governor general, Madras States, No FR24/37, (OIOC: R/1/1/2912) 31.12.1937.
- 28 From the agent to the governor general, Madras States, No FR21/39, (OIOC: R/1/1/3395 [40(9)-P(S)/1939]) 15.11.1939.
- 29 P G Sahasranama Iyer (ed), *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of Sachivottama Sir CP Ramaswami Aiyar Dewan of Travancore*, Volumes I and II, Trivandrum, 1945, pp 48, 53. “How shall we define a university?”

- It is and should be a school of knowledge of all kinds consisting of teachers and learners drawn from all strata and coming from every quarter. It should essentially be a place for the communication and circulation of thought by means of personal intercourse. [...] The interrelation between the universities and national life and national programmes is a matter that is of no mere academic importance, but forms a topic of absorbing and immediate interest.”
- 30 P G Sahasranama Iyer (ed), *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of Sachivottama Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyar Dewan of Travancore*, Volumes I and II, Trivandrum, 1945, p 57.
- 31 The declaration proceeds as follows: “It is the duty of the community to equip every man with sufficient education to enable him to be as useful and interested a citizen as his capacity allows. Furthermore, it is the duty of the community to render all knowledge available to him and such special education as will give him equality of opportunity for the development of his distinctive gifts in the service of mankind. He shall have easy and prompt access to all information necessary for him to form a judgment upon current events and issues.” P G Sahasranama Iyer (ed), *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of Sachivottama Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyar Dewan of Travancore*, Volumes I and II, Trivandrum, 1945, p 63.
- 32 P G Sahasranama Iyer (ed), *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of Sachivottama Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyar Dewan of Travancore*, Volumes I and II, Trivandrum, 1945, p 65.
- 33 This was expressed in a speech by C P Ramaswami Aiyar: “...unless you equip yourselves for the fight in the competition of the world, you will be nowhere”, Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Maunal*, Vol III, p 744.
- 34 From the agent to the governor general, Madras States, No FR23/37, 16.12.1937 (OIOC: R/1/1/2912 [35-P(S)/1937]); From the agent to the governor general, Madras States, No FR23/42, 17.12.1942 (OIOC: R/1/1/3786 [9(6)-P(S)/1942]).
- 35 The five “northern” coastal provinces of the Golkonda Sultanate and later the Hyderabad Nizam were Guntur (also known as Kondvidu), Kondapalli (Mustafanagar) Elluru, Rajamandri and Cikakol (Srikulam), for which Clive obtained sanads from the Mughal emperor. In 1769, the acquisition was finalised and management went to the British (M S R Anjaneyulu, Vizagapatam District 1769-1834, *A History of the Relations between the Zamindars and the East India Company*. Visakhapatnam (Andhra University) 1982; M S R Anjaneyulu, ‘The English Acquisition of Chicacole Circar’ in *Journal of Indian History*, 61. Jg (1983), S 127-134; C D Maclean: *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*, Vol 1. New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1987, p 179-80, fn 39: “Sketch History of the Northern Circars”; G Ranganayakulu Patrudu: *A Brief Account of the Bobbili Zamindari*. Madras (np) 1889. Swetachalapati Venkata Ranga Rao Bahadur: *A Revised and Enlarged Account of the Bobbili Zamindari*. Madras (np) 1907.
- 36 With the exception of Vizianagaram and Bobbili (sanads issued 1652), their privileges go back to the time of the Orissan empire (1118-1568), mostly to the 15th century. Sixteen “ancient and hill zamindaries” are traditionally spoken of. The major ruling families lived in Peddapuram, Nandapur/Jaipur, Parlakimedi, Bobbili, Bhogapuram/Vizianagaram and Khallikota.
- 37 M S R Anjaneyulu, ‘The Battle of Padmanabham’ in *Archív Orientální*, 45, Jg (1977), S 33-47.
- 38 Jeypore, the most backward among them remained stagnant for the longest time, while Parlakimedi, which was under the court of wards for most of the 19th century, belatedly joined in the race for prestige through modernisation in the 1880s.
- 39 A V Dattatreya Sarma, Vijayanagaram Jilla Caritra-Samskrti, Mansas, Vijayanagaram, 1983. Idem, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ananda Gajapati*, Department of History, Maharaja’s College, Vijayanagaram, 1985.
- 40 This is mostly due to the difficulty of securing the archival data. The zamindars had no educational departments like the princely states, and whatever records (such as municipality records, education department correspondence, etc) exist are scattered over three state archives, some local records offices, family archives, and several collections of the OIOC in London. Being “foreign” in some of the archives, nothing has been done to preserve the documents, and at least three of the family archives are completely destroyed, except for small sections which can be traced in London. This state of affairs allows only for a very cursory glimpse at materials which were of importance for British administrators, and which were used in compilations and statistics in order to produce annual reports, gazetteers or census reports.
- 41 The donations mentioned are merely a small selection from a large number of charitable activities. There was, for instance, a very lively interest in Telugu, Sanskrit and Persian classical texts (Dattatreya Sarma [Vijaya Datt] 1985: 50-60; T Donappa: *Andhra Samsthanamulu, Sahityaposhanam*. Walteru (Andhra Visvakala Parishattu), 1969, for all royal courts of Andhra).
- 42 Y Narayana Murti, 1917:29-30, Dattatreya Sarma [Vijaya Datt] 1985: 36-40.
- 43 The favourites for the location were Vijayavada, Rajamandri and Visakhapatnam. On the “battle of sites”, see A V Dattatreya Sarma, *Integration of Andhra and Orissa Cultures*, BR Publishing Corp, Delhi, 1986, p 84, P Ragunadha Rao, *Modern History of Andhra Pradesh*, New Delhi/Jalandhar/Bangalore, Sterling Publishers, 1985 (3rd ed), p 115.
- 44 A V Dattatreya Sarma, *Integration of Andhra and Orissa Cultures*, B R Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1986, pp 84-86.
- 45 If Bhagavan’s concept of “native” modernity is thought through, it leads in the last analysis to neo-Hinduist tendencies, which in the case of education can be seen as put into practice in structurally modern establishments with traditional content, e.g. with the introduction in 2001 of vedic astrology as a scientific subject at various universities (*Current Science* 80, No 10, May 25, 2001, *The Hindu*, August 6, 2001, *Asia Times Online*, August 16, 2001, [http://www.bbx.co.uk/worldservice/sci\\_tech/highlights/010531](http://www.bbx.co.uk/worldservice/sci_tech/highlights/010531) [available on May 21, 2004], *Deccan Herald*, May 6, 2004). A similar attitude can be found in the attempt to rewrite history in order to make it congruent with the religious beliefs of certain conservative elites in north India. See the debates on the textbook controversy: <http://www.sacw.net/HateEducation> [available on May 21, 2004]; Mridula Mukherjee/Aditya Mukherjee, ‘Communalisation of Education. The History Textbook Controversy: An Overview’, <http://www.sacw.net/HateEducation/MridulaAditya122001.html> [available on May 21, 2004]; *Resist the Communalisation of Education CPI(M)* Publication, New Delhi: A K G Bhawan, October 2002. Kay Benedict, ‘School History Booklets Shock Govt Panel’, *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), December 3, 2001, p 7; Puja Birla, ‘CBSE Tells Its Schools Not to Teach, Even Discuss the Following Subjects. Portions from History Textbooks to be Deleted: How Brahmins Thrived on Gifts, Evils of Caste System, Vedic Sacrifices’, *The New Indian Express*, Chennai, November 23, 2001, p 7; Harish Gupta, ‘If History is One-sided, We Should Change It, Says PM’, *Sunday Express*, Chennai, November 25, 2001, p 9; ‘History Texts Need Sanction of Religious Heads: Joshi’, *The New Indian Express*, Chennai, December 4, 2001, p 9; Mushirul Hasan, ‘Imagining History: The Deafening Clash of Myth and Fact’, *The New Indian Express*, Bhubaneswar, January 10, 2002, p 8; Yogesh Vajpeyi, ‘Indian History Congress Slams NDA Bid to ‘Distort’ History’, *The New Indian Express*, Chennai, January 1, 2002, p 10; Krishna Kumar, *Prejudice and Pride: School Histories of the Freedom Struggle in India and Pakistan*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2001. After the elections in May 2004, the new coalition government announced the re-evaluation of all textbooks.
- 46 This goes to the extreme in the case of Annamalai University, founded and financed in 1928 by one individual, Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar of Chettinad. <http://www.annamalaiuniversity.ac.in/genesis.htm> [available on May 19, 2004].
- 47 The British attitude to education in India in the 18th century was dominated by the orientalist paradigm and “its earliest efforts were confined to the establishment of Mahommedan and Sanskrit colleges of the old types” (Maclean, Vol 1, p 563, footnote 1). For practical purposes, British administrators had to study Persian, and many took additional examinations in other local languages. Western education was at first entirely in the hands of missionaries. In 1813, the India bill was passed and included an amendment on native education, whereby the promotion of literature and knowledge of the sciences was encouraged and money earmarked for this purpose. The appointed committee on public instruction proved in the long run to be a battleground for two hostile parties, the Orientalists, headed by H H Wilson, and the Anglicists, who were advised chiefly by C Trevelyan. As president of the Board of Education, T B Macaulay denounced the continued promotion of oriental learning. A resolution drawn up in 1835 by the governor general, Lord William Bentinck, finally settled the matter in favour of western education. Throughout this period, the British administration in Madras remained passive on the subject of education. It was not until the 1850s that it increased its determination to play an active role in education. Beginning with the establishment of two colleges, this involvement culminated in the founding of Madras University in 1857.