



Trailblazers Of Knowledge: Old Delhi College's Enduring Influence On India's Intellectual Landscape

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Abstract

This comprehensive research paper thoroughly explores the historical trajectory and profound impact of Old Delhi College, an esteemed institution established in 1825 that deeply influenced India's educational and intellectual landscape. The college, established amidst burgeoning intellectual currents, swiftly became a hub of learning, blending traditional Indian wisdom with modern Western education. This study traces the institution's evolution, revealing how it transformed into an academic powerhouse offering a diverse curriculum spanning humanities, sciences, languages, and literature. Renowned scholars and reformers graced its halls, shaping the institution's enduring legacy. The paper scrutinizes the pivotal role played by Old Delhi College in shaping the minds of its alumni, who emerged as pioneers in various fields, catalysing societal change. Additionally, it investigates the college's impact on India's intellectual landscape, highlighting its contributions to print culture. Noteworthy publications, including scholarly journals and periodicals, acted as conduits for disseminating knowledge and progressive ideas, showcasing the institution's dedication to academic excellence and enlightenment. By meticulously analyzing historical records and scholarly perspectives, this paper elucidates how Old Delhi College emerged as a beacon of intellectual inquiry, leaving a lasting imprint on India's educational ethos and intellectual discourse during its foundational years.

Keywords: Delhi College, Western Education in Urdu, Colonial Education, Lahore College.

Introduction

The Old Delhi College holds an esteemed position within India's educational heritage, exerting a profound influence on the nation's intellectual and educational realms. Its inception amid the vibrant currents of the 19th century mirrors the socio-cultural dynamics of that era. This research paper embarks on a comprehensive exploration of Old Delhi College, tracing its historical trajectory and meticulously examining its far-reaching impact on India's intellectual and educational landscapes. Originally established as a madrasa, the institution aimed to impart Western education while fostering a harmonious blend of Eastern and Western knowledge systems. Renamed Delhi College, it emerged as a pivotal institution for nurturing minds well-versed in classical Indian wisdom and modern Western scholarship. The institution stood at the centre of the Mughal capital, embodying the convergence of diverse cultures and ideas, creating an environment conducive to intellectual discourse. The college's evolution mirrored the shifting tides of colonial India's educational policies. Initially moulded to meet the needs of the British administration, it gradually diversified its curriculum to encompass a wide spectrum of subjects. The institution cultivated erudite scholars proficient in disciplines spanning humanities, sciences, languages, and literature. Eminent figures such as Mirza Ghalib, the iconic Urdu poet, and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a visionary reformer, graced its corridors, significantly shaping the

intellectual landscape of their time. Delhi College's influence extended far beyond its walls, leaving an indelible mark on India's emerging educational landscape. Its alumni, equipped with a synthesis of traditional wisdom and modern knowledge, played pivotal roles across various spheres, catalysing societal transformation. The institution's ethos of critical thinking and academic excellence radiated through its graduates, who became torchbearers of progressive thought and drivers of social change.

At the core of Delhi College's impact lies its pivotal role in shaping India's vibrant print culture. The institution served as a breeding ground for intellectuals and scholars who made significant contributions to newspapers, journals, and literary works. Notably, the *Qiran-al-Sa'dain*¹, a distinguished weekly periodical, epitomized the scholarly rigor and erudition cultivated within Delhi College's confines. Helmed by luminaries like Pandit Dharam Narayan Bhaskar, this publication attained unparalleled excellence, enriching the intellectual landscape of its time. As this research paper unfolds, it delves deeper into Delhi College's multifaceted influence on India's educational landscape and intellectual resurgence. It aims to illuminate the institution's role as a crucible of ideas, nurturing minds that shaped academia, literature, and societal transformation during colonial India. Through a meticulous examination of historical archives, scholarly works, and testimonies, this study endeavours to elucidate the enduring legacy of Old Delhi College and its indelible imprint on India's intellectual fabric.

Legacy Unbound: Historiographical Studies on Delhi College's Intellectual Impact

Margrit Pernau's work on Delhi College highlights the pivotal role of translation in the institution's endeavours. The college's establishment wasn't merely an educational venture but deeply rooted in bridging British culture and scholarship with an Indian audience. Translation was central to this effort, evident through initiatives like the Vernacular Translation Society and translating textbooks. This commitment to translation involved the active participation of the entire college community, from principals to students. It went beyond simple language conversion; it aimed to make British knowledge accessible to Indians by rendering it in Urdu. However, Pernau's perspective emphasizes that the translators at Delhi College weren't passive conveyors of colonial influence. Their translations weren't mere replicas of British texts; rather, they reflected the translators' cultural assumptions, preferences, and perspectives. In the act of translation, they consciously made choices about what to include, emphasize, and how to reinterpret British texts into Urdu. These translators had their own motives, intending to effect change through their translations. They sought to infuse their interpretations, ideologies, and possibly elements of Indian culture into the translated texts. Pernau suggests that translators at Delhi College weren't just tools of colonial imposition but active participants in a cultural dialogue. They utilized translation as a medium to influence and shape perceptions within the Indian

¹ *Qiran al-Sadain* or *Qiran-us-Saadain* was a notable Urdu-language weekly journal that was published from Delhi during the 19th century. The publication was known for its significant contributions to Urdu literature, intellectual discourse, and cultural discussions of that era. It held a prestigious position in the realm of Urdu journalism and was recognized for its scholarly content and thought-provoking articles. Edited by prominent figures such as Pandit Dharam Narayan Bhaskar, among others, *Qiran al-Sadain* attained high acclaim for its quality of writing, discussions on various topics, and its contributions to the intellectual landscape of colonial India. The journal covered a wide range of subjects, including literature, social issues, politics, culture, and science, catering to a diverse readership and reflecting the spirit of the times. This publication from Delhi College served as a testament to the institution's commitment to fostering intellectual rigor and served as a platform for the expression of ideas, contributing significantly to the development of Urdu literature and journalism in India during that period.

context, aiming to integrate their viewpoints and cultural nuances into the translated material.²

Gail Minault highlights Delhi College's role as a bridge between East and West across multiple dimensions. The institution uniquely amalgamated two distinct forms of educational funding: the Muslim endowments referred to as "awqaf" (singular: waqf), traditionally designated for religious education, and state sponsorship facilitated by the British East India Company, which utilized tax revenues to bolster educational initiatives. This blend of financial support underscored the multifaceted nature of the college's backing, representing a fusion of religiously motivated endowments and British colonial state patronage. Furthermore, Delhi College operated amidst a backdrop of significant intellectual discourse encapsulated in a debate between Orientalists and Anglicists regarding the nature and content of education. The institution became a focal point within this broader conversation about the objectives and curriculum of educational institutions in colonial India. The contrasting perspectives of Orientalists, who advocated for a focus on Eastern languages, cultures, and knowledge systems, and Anglicists, who promoted Western education and the English language, created a dynamic environment that accompanied the diverse forms of patronage supporting the college. Minault underscores how Delhi College was not only a nexus between different forms of financial backing but also a platform where the clash of educational ideologies between Orientalists and Anglicists played out, shaping the nature and trajectory of education in colonial India.³

The institution of Delhi College stood as a dynamic convergence point, bridging distinct learning traditions often classified as "Oriental" and "Western". These classifications emerged from enduring cultural debates that unfolded from the late 18th century, persisted throughout Delhi College's existence, and continue to reverberate in contemporary educational discourse. Delhi College effectively blended two contrasting modes of knowledge transmission: the traditional madrasa approach rooted in the teacher-student relationship, oral dissemination of established texts, and emphasis on memorization, with the emerging Western curriculum reliant on printed textbooks for wider student access. This shift from oral tradition to print fundamentally altered knowledge transmission. The traditional madrasa relied on oral communication, emphasizing memorization and verbal elucidation of texts, while copying texts was secondary. Conversely, the emerging Western curriculum emphasized printed materials, enabling wider distribution and reducing costs. This shift also moved from a teacher-student model to

² Margrit Pernau (ed.), *The Delhi College: Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Education before 1857*, (New Delhi, 2006).

³ During this period, the oriental curriculum primarily concentrated on the study of India's classical languages—Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian—alongside an exploration of their associated literatures and religious texts. This educational approach aimed to delve into the rich heritage of these languages, exploring classical literary works and religious scriptures, nurturing a deep understanding of India's cultural and linguistic legacy. In contrast, the Western curriculum underwent a transformation from its classical and clerical origins toward a growing emphasis on scientific disciplines. It included elements such as language grammar and composition in modern tongues, although Latin and Greek still held significance in Europe during this time. Additionally, the curriculum encompassed readings in history, philosophy, and an expanding array of scientific fields. Subjects broadly categorized as "natural philosophy"—encompassing early scientific inquiries, various branches of mathematics, and astronomy—were gaining prominence within the Western educational paradigm. This transition within the Western curriculum marked a shift from a predominantly classical and religious focus to a more diversified approach, incorporating scientific disciplines and new avenues of intellectual inquiry. In contrast, the oriental curriculum maintained its focus on classical languages and associated literary and religious texts, reflecting the continuation of traditional knowledge transmission methods prevalent in the Indian context. See Gail Minault, 'Qiran Al-Sa'adain: The Dialogue Between Eastern and Western Learning at Delhi College,' in *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History 1760-1860*, edited by Jamal Malik, (Brill, 2000), pp. 260-277.

individual scholars acquiring knowledge from printed resources, theoretically encouraging original ideas but necessitating the exchange of thoughts through publications and societies. This transition from orality to print marked a larger transformation in educational methodologies and idea exchange, encapsulated within the context of Delhi College. The institution occupied a unique crossroads, symbolizing the convergence of diverse educational, cultural, and philosophical traditions prevalent at the time. It represented a blend of contrasting educational philosophies, financing sources, and transmission methods that were influential during its era.⁴ Delhi College was a testament to this convergence, harmonizing different educational philosophies by integrating the traditional madrasa approach with the emerging Western curriculum. Financially, it amalgamated Muslim endowments (waqf) designated for religious education with support from the British East India Company using tax revenues to bolster education. Moreover, the college served as a platform where various knowledge transmission methods coexisted. It witnessed the merging of the oral tradition from the madrasa system, reliant on the teacher-student relationship and oral text transmission, with the rising use of printed textbooks and a more individualistic approach characteristic of Western education. Delhi College epitomized a synthesis of these multifaceted educational, cultural, and philosophical traditions, embodying a dynamic fusion that reflected the diverse landscape of education and knowledge dissemination during its existence.

S. Irfan Habib, Dhruv Raina, and Mushirul Hasan have highlighted the pivotal role of educators such as Master Ram Chandra and Malawi Zaka Ullah in cultivating a scientific outlook among students at Delhi College. These educators were instrumental in fostering a mindset inclined toward scientific inquiry and exploration within the institution. Malawi Zaka Ullah's definition of science, centered on the pursuit of absolute truth, resonated deeply with Delhi College's commitment to seeking truth within its educational framework. This echoed the college's dedication to promoting a rigorous and truth-seeking approach within education. Zaka Ullah's perspective likely contributed significantly to shaping the institution's ethos, instilling in students a reverence for seeking truth through scientific inquiry and critical thinking. The emphasis on scientific principles and the quest for truth would have played a crucial role in nurturing a scientific mindset among the students of Delhi College under the guidance of educators like Zaka Ullah and Master Ram Chandra.⁵ Ram Chandra personifies an enlightened Indian perspective characterized by critical analysis of societal norms through the lens of influential Western ideologies advocated by figures like Hume, Locke, Rousseau, and Voltaire. His influence encapsulates an era in Indian intellectual thought marked by a profound inclination toward critical scrutiny and inquisitiveness. Ram Chandra's embrace and engagement with the philosophical and ideological contributions of prominent Western thinkers signify a broader trend in Indian intellectual circles during that period. His incorporation of the ideas of Hume, Locke, Rousseau, and Voltaire underscores a willingness to assimilate and critically examine diverse perspectives, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries. This approach reflects an intellectual curiosity and a commitment to rigorous analysis and examination of societal norms prevalent in both Indian and Western contexts. Chandra's embodiment of this intellectual ethos represents a significant phase in Indian thought, characterized by an openness to diverse intellectual influences and a propensity for critically evaluating established norms. His advocacy for critical scrutiny and inquisitiveness likely contributed to shaping a generation

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mushirul Hasan, 'Maulwi Zaka Ullah: Sharif Culture and Colonial Rule,' in *The Delhi College: Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Education before 1857*, edited by Margrit Pernau, (New Delhi: 2006), pp. 261-298.

of intellectuals and students at Delhi College, fostering a culture of analytical thinking and openness to new ideas within the institution.⁶

In addition to cultivating scientific curiosity among students, educators at Delhi College played a significant role in advancing Urdu prose as a prominent medium for disseminating knowledge. This advancement was spurred by the burgeoning intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm prevalent during that era. Educators like Master Ram Chandra and Malawi Zaka Ullah, alongside Delhi College as an institution, contributed substantially to the evolution and enrichment of Urdu prose. They recognized the potential of Urdu as a language that could effectively convey and disseminate knowledge to a wider audience, transcending linguistic barriers. The educational milieu nurtured at Delhi College was marked by an environment fostering intellectual curiosity and progressive thinking, which notably supported the utilization of Urdu as a medium for scholarly and educational pursuits. The educators' efforts to elevate Urdu prose aligned with the era's growing interest in expanding access to knowledge and making it more accessible to a diverse audience. This movement not only contributed to the enrichment of Urdu literature but also played a crucial role in democratizing education and knowledge dissemination by utilizing a language that resonated with a broader section of society. Hence, the endeavours of the educators and the collective efforts of Delhi College played a crucial role in fostering scientific inquisitiveness, while simultaneously propelling Urdu prose to the forefront as a powerful medium for the dissemination of knowledge and ideas during that intellectually vibrant era.

C.M. Naim's assessment underscores the significant contribution of Delhi College's cultural milieu in nurturing a fresh intellectual dialogue among the populace of Delhi. The institution, along with colleges in Agra and Benares, played pivotal roles in laying the foundation and nurturing intellectual growth within the region. Despite the destructive impact of the Revolt on Delhi College, its intellectual legacy endured and remained resilient. The Revolt resulted in the destruction of Delhi College by Indian soldiers and locals, exacerbated by the indifference displayed by certain British officers. Concurrently, the rise of Lahore as a hub for educational pursuits, combined with the College's physical devastation, affected its immediate existence. However, the enduring intellectual legacy persisted and continued to flourish. Individuals such as Nasir Ahmad, Zakau 'I-Lah, Muhammad Hussain Azar, and Pyare Lal Ash, particularly in the latter half of the nineteenth century, made significant contributions to this intellectual legacy. Their endeavours significantly contributed to the advancement of Muslim intellectualism and the widespread growth of Urdu language and literature. Certainly, figures such as Syed Ahmad Khan and Altaf Hussain Hali were acquainted with the contributions and impact of Delhi College, despite not being alumni of the institution and undoubtedly drew influence from its legacy in their intellectual pursuits. The enduring intellectual legacy of Delhi College, despite its physical destruction, remained instrumental in shaping the intellectual discourse, nurturing scholars, and fostering advancements in fields like language, literature, and cultural thought, leaving an indelible mark on the intellectual landscape of the region.⁷

The intellectual Renaissance ignited by Delhi College transcended the institution's physical existence, persisting and gaining momentum over time. The intellectual awakening sparked by the college extended its influence across North India, leaving a lasting impact on the region's cultural and educational landscape. Despite the College's destruction, its legacy served as a catalyst for a broader

⁶ S. Irfan Habib, and Dhruv Raina, 'The Introduction of Scientific Rationality into India: A Study of Master Ramchandra-Urdu Journalist, Mathematician, and Educationalist,' *Annals of Science*, 46 (6), (1989), pp. 597-610.

⁷ C. M. Naim, 'Ghalib's Delhi: A Shamelessly Revisionist Look at Two Popular Metaphors,' *Annual of Urdu Studies*, vol. 18 (2003), pp. 3-24.

intellectual movement that continued to flourish beyond its walls. The ideas, principles, and intellectual fervour cultivated within the college permeated through academic circles, influencing scholars, educators, and thinkers across North India. The seeds of intellectual curiosity and the quest for knowledge sown by Delhi College continued to germinate and evolve, leading to a proliferation of intellectual pursuits, advancements in various fields, and the nurturing of a vibrant cultural and educational environment in the region. This enduring legacy contributed significantly to the intellectual Renaissance that persisted and expanded its influence well beyond the physical lifespan of the institution, leaving an enduring mark on the intellectual fabric of North India.

Unveiling Delhi College: A Condensed History

The educational centre in Delhi has its origins primarily linked to an ancient madrasa, with historical documentation tracing its establishment back to the late 17th or early 18th century. Traditionally, this founding has been attributed to Ghaziuddin I, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I, the founder of the Hyderabad State, was renowned as the forebearer of Mir Qamar-ud-din Siddiqi. Mir Qamar-ud-din Siddiqi, also known as Chin Qilich Khan, was a prominent noble under the Mughal Empire and laid the foundations of the Asaf Jahi dynasty, which ruled the princely state of Hyderabad. However, the precise inception of this educational institution is a subject of conflicting information and varied historical accounts. The founding of the madrasa is often attributed to Ghaziuddin I⁸, who was an influential figure in the region, there are conflicting narratives that suggest an alternative timeline. These accounts propose the establishment of the madrasa in 1792, crediting Ghaziuddin II, the son of Asaf Jah, as its initiator. This discrepancy in historical records creates ambiguity regarding the exact founding date and the figure responsible for initiating the educational centre in Delhi. The differing narratives surrounding the inception of the madrasa underscore the complexities in historical documentation, wherein various sources present conflicting information, leading to ambiguity regarding key historical events such as the establishment of significant educational institutions like the madrasa in Delhi.⁹ Despite shifting political landscapes, Delhi remained a prominent centre for Islamic scholarship and hadith studies, sustained through generations from Shah Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi to Shah Waliullah and Shah Abd al-Aziz, underscoring its enduring legacy in Islamic learning.¹⁰

In the wake of declining patronage from the Mughal state, educational institutions dedicated to religious learning in Delhi faced increasing reliance on private endowments for sustenance. By the onset of the 19th century, the financial resources derived from the Waqf (endowment) of the Madrasa had significantly diminished. Consequently, this scarcity of financial support resulted in both the institution's decreased financial stability and a decrease in the student enrolment figures. The dwindling resources and declining student enrolment created a sense of despondency within the institution. Against this backdrop, in the 1820s, the Delhi Committee on Public Instruction intervened by securing an allocation from the General Education Fund. This allocation aimed to provide specific financial support targeted at fostering oriental studies at the madrasa. The involvement of the Delhi Committee on Public Instruction, aided by the allocation from the General Education Fund, was a pivotal step

⁸ Ghaziuddin I, a Mughal noble and governor of the Deccan, is associated with establishing educational and charitable institutions during his tenure in the Deccan region, including the founding of a madrasa. However, historical records might vary, and different sources might provide diverse accounts regarding the founding of specific institutions.

⁹ Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, (Delhi, 1989), p. 12.

¹⁰ Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, (Princeton, 1982), pp. 35-45.

toward rejuvenating the institution. This financial assistance aimed at promoting oriental studies helped alleviate the financial strain faced by the madrasa, contributing to its sustenance and revitalization. The initiative not only provided a lifeline for the institution but also underscored the significance of oriental studies within the educational landscape of Delhi during that period.¹¹

Initially established as a private institution in 1824, Delhi College underwent a significant transformation the following year. It was rebranded and brought under colonial administration. Financial sustenance was ensured through an allocated budget of Rupees 600 per month, which was further augmented by additional contributions from local sources, raising the total to Rupees 1137 per month. This marked a substantial increase in financial support, enabling the college to expand its operations. A noteworthy contribution to the Education Fund occurred in 1829 when Itimad al-Dowlah, also known as Mir Fazal Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of King Nasiruddin Haidar of Awadh generously donated a substantial sum of 170,000 Rupees. This generous donation was specifically earmarked to promote Islamic education within the city of Delhi. The significant contribution received was utilized to support the ongoing operations and development of Delhi College.¹² Despite its primary focus on Islamic education, the institution demonstrated inclusivity by welcoming Hindu students. It went a step further by incorporating a specialized Sanskrit class into its curriculum. This inclusive approach highlighted the college's commitment to fostering diversity and facilitating cross-cultural learning. By accommodating students from diverse religious backgrounds and offering courses beyond Islamic studies, such as Sanskrit classes, Delhi College aimed to create an environment conducive to pluralism and intercultural exchange.¹³ The following elements constituted the establishment of the college:¹⁴

4 Maulvi at 50, 40, 35, and 15 rupees a month	Rupees 140
5 Munshis, two at 30, one at 20, and two at 15 rupees a month	Rupees 110
1 Pandit	Rupees 50
18 students, at 5 rupees a month	Rupees 90
291 students, at 2 rupees a month	Rupees 582
Servants and Contingencies	Rupees 198
Total	Rupees 1200

¹¹ IOR, Board Collections, No.: 25694-25695, vol. 909, (1826-27), pp. 487-491, 540-553, 565.

¹² M. Ikram Chagatai, 'Dr Aloys Sprenger and the Delhi College', in Margrit Pernau (ed.), *The Delhi College: Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Education before 1857*, (Delhi, 2006), pp. 105-124; William Knighton, *Nawab Nasir-ud-Din Haidar of Oudh: His Life and Pastimes*, (New Delhi, 1990), p. xx.

¹³ Michael H. Fisher, 'Mohan Lal Kashmiri 1812-1877, in Margrit Pernau (ed.), *The Delhi College*, (Delhi, 2006), p. 236.

¹⁴ National Archives of India (hereafter NAI), Home, Public, no. 20, December 1831, Report on the Colleges and Schools for Native Education, under the Superintendence of the General Committee of Public Instruction in Bengal, pp. 26-27.

The administration of the college was delegated to a regional committee responsible for overseeing its governance. This Committee appointed both a Secretary and a Superintendent, each allocated a monthly stipend of 300 rupees. The Secretary's responsibilities encompassed supervising biannual public examinations conducted at the college. These examinations were conducted with the support and involvement of local individuals from Delhi who contributed their expertise to facilitate the assessment process. Additionally, the college implemented a system of annual monetary incentives to reward academic achievements. These incentives served as acknowledgments and encouragements for students who demonstrated exceptional academic prowess and accomplishments within the educational framework of the college. Such incentivization likely motivated students to excel academically and contributed to fostering a culture of academic achievement and excellence within the institution.

The establishment of Delhi College in 1825 marked a significant milestone in the educational history with the support of the East India Company. This institution represented the Company's deliberate efforts to advance Oriental studies while concurrently promoting the English language and Western scientific disciplines. This period, often termed as the 'Delhi Renaissance,' emerged as a transient yet impactful era characterized by these educational pursuits and cultural advancements.¹⁵ In 1827, the government sanctioned additional funds, supplemented by locally raised finances, to initiate English language instruction along with the teaching of astronomy and mathematics following "European principles" at Delhi College. By this juncture, the College had delineated its curriculum into two distinct sections: the Oriental section was committed to teaching Arabic, Persian grammar, literature, and various Islamic subjects, and the Anglo-vernacular section aimed at imparting education in Western subjects. Urdu served as the primary medium of instruction employed at the institution, serving as a bridge between the Oriental and Anglo-vernacular sections. This strategic choice of language facilitated communication and learning across diverse educational domains, enabling students to access knowledge in both traditional Oriental studies and Western disciplines. The creation of these distinct sections within the curriculum underscored the institution's commitment to fostering a synthesis of diverse educational traditions, showcasing a unique blend of Oriental and Western knowledge systems. This endeavour was emblematic of the 'Delhi Renaissance,' characterized by a concerted effort to amalgamate different educational streams for a holistic approach to learning and intellectual advancement.¹⁶

The endorsement of Delhi College in 1825, based on recommendations from the General Committee, initially began as a conventional act of support. In 1824, the institution had a modest start, comprising merely nine students and a single instructor. However, upon establishment, the college underwent a transformation, assembling a team composed of multiple Indian educators alongside an English principal.¹⁷ Within a decade, by 1828, Delhi College's English division introduced a revised curriculum encompassing the English language, literature, and contemporary European scientific disciplines. This significant modification paved the way for ambitious Indian students to engage in an Anglicized educational framework, aspiring to augment their career prospects, particularly in service to the British administration. Concurrently, the older oriental section persisted within the institution. It

¹⁵ Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughals: Studies in Late Mughal Delhi*, (New Delhi, 1969), p. 200.

¹⁶ Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, (Delhi, 1989), pp. 22-33.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

continued to offer instruction in languages such as Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit, alongside subjects like geography, mathematics, and the sciences. This coexistence of the English and oriental sections reflected the college's commitment to accommodating diverse educational streams, catering to students aspiring for both traditional Oriental studies and Westernized education. The dual curriculum showcased the institution's transitional phase, where it sought to strike a balance between traditional Oriental learning and the burgeoning Western educational paradigms. Delhi College's evolution exemplified the fusion of different educational ideologies, catering to the aspirations and career paths of students within the changing socio-political landscape of the time.¹⁸ Within a span of three years, the institution could proudly boast an impressive enrolment figure of 300 students within its section.¹⁹

The endeavours of the Delhi Vernacular Translation Society significantly complemented the educational pursuits of Delhi College. The Society achieved noteworthy success in translating scholarly literature from Arabic, Persian, and English into Urdu, specifically catering to the academic needs of the College. Maulvi 'Abdu 'l- Haq, in his publication on Delhi College, documented approximately 128 books—comprising both original works and translations—published by the Society. A variety of subjects were encompassed within these books, spanning geometry, algebra, astronomy, physics, chemistry, calculus, geography, history, and mechanics. Notably, these translations were completed by teachers and former students of the College, showcasing the institution's commitment to academic rigor and knowledge dissemination. In 1855, the total enrolment at Delhi College amounted to 350 students. In that year, a significant portion of the enrolment, specifically 217 students, was dedicated to the English language section, indicating a notable interest and participation in Western education. Moreover, the breakdown of enrolment in Oriental languages exhibited 77 students for Persian, 33 for Arabic, and 23 for Sanskrit. This distribution of students across different sections indicated a balance between the pursuits of Westernized education and traditional Oriental studies within the College.²⁰ Translation emerged as a pivotal element within the significant initiatives undertaken by Delhi College, notably exemplified through the activities and initiatives undertaken by the Vernacular Translation Society. The translated works executed by the scholars associated with Delhi College not only showcased their cultural perspectives, preferences, and interpretive choices but also mirrored their reinterpretation of British texts as they were transformed into the Urdu language. These scholars harboured transformative motives, seeking to advance particular agendas through the act of translation.²¹

Key figures like Master Ram Chandra, who served as the science instructor, and Maulvi Zaka Ullah, renowned as a historian and author of textbooks, were prominent in this endeavour, embarked on bold pursuits to acquire new knowledge. In their pursuit, they aimed to rejuvenate their cultural milieu by embracing modern learning while simultaneously upholding their indigenous heritage. Their engagement in translation efforts epitomized a conscious attempt to bridge the gap between Western knowledge systems and traditional wisdom, thereby contributing to the cultural revitalization of their community. It's notable that these scholars sought guidance and support from the colonial authority, leveraging the resources and opportunities provided by the British administration. Importantly, during

¹⁸ Anu Kumar, 'New Lamps for Old: Colonial Experiments with Vernacular Education, Pre- and Post-1857,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42:19, (May 12-18, 2007), pp. 1710-1716.

¹⁹ C. M. Naim, 'Ghalib's Delhi,' *Annual of Urdu Studies*, (2003), p. 14.

²⁰ Abdu'l-Haqq, *Marhum Dihli College*, (Delhi, 1989), pp. 46-47.

²¹ Margrit Pernau (ed.), *The Delhi College*, (New Delhi, 2006), p. 18.

its initial stages, the colonial authority did not overtly express intentions to replace oriental languages with English, thereby allowing for a concurrent emphasis on preserving vernacular languages while assimilating Western knowledge. The act of translation, undertaken by figures like Master Ram Chandra and Maulvi Zakauallah, served as a conduit for cultural reinvigoration and the infusion of modern knowledge into indigenous frameworks. Their efforts symbolized a harmonious blend of preserving cultural identity while embracing advancements from the West, all within the framework of educational pursuits at Delhi College.²²

Transcending Boundaries: Urdu Translation and Educational Curriculum

In 1842, Felix Boutros introduced a pivotal proposal within an educational memorandum at Delhi College, aiming to create vernacular textbooks. His comprehensive plan included publishing works by eminent scholars such as Dr. John Abercrombie, William O'Shaughnessy's chemistry text, excerpts from Dugald Stewart's moral philosophy, and William Robertson's History of America were among the influential texts used during that period. Boutros not only presented this proposal but also detailed guidelines ensuring consistency during the translation process. He recommended directly incorporating transliterated English scientific terms into the text in cases where no direct Urdu equivalent was available, exemplified by terms like "sodium" or "chlorine". Furthermore, he recommended retaining established scientific terms in Urdu, like using "loha" for "iron", whenever a corresponding term was available. Similar principles were suggested for creating compound terms. Notably, Boutros approved the use of Greek prefixes like "mono", "di", "proto", "hypo", or "peri" for creating compound Urdu words, although he didn't provide specific examples.²³ Boutros firmly championed Urdu as the most suitable language for educational translations in the North Western Provinces (hereafter NWP) within the context of Delhi College. He justified this choice by highlighting Urdu's extensive usage across northern India and its official status in the region's courts.²⁴ Moreover, he argued that Urdu's intrinsic nature and historical evolution rendered it highly suitable for transmitting European scientific knowledge. He perceived this task as refining Urdu to effectively serve this purpose.²⁵

In the framework of Delhi College, the perceived shortcomings of Urdu, particularly its alleged lack of adequate terminology for expressing Western scientific concepts, were not solely seen as limitations of the language itself. Alternatively, these were seen as symbols of the reduced standing not just of the language itself but also of its speakers and the civilization they represented. This evaluation of language quality prompted a parallel assessment of civilizations. The prevailing official stance during that period asserted that the task of translating English scientific literature into Urdu and elevating the language should predominantly be shouldered by Europeans in the government's employ. The selection of English terms for inclusion during translation was considered to require not only a deep comprehension of scientific and practical subjects but also a judicious assessment perceived to be more

²² Anu Kumar, 'New Lamps for Old, (2007), p. 1712.

²³ IOR, 'Minute of Felix Boutros on Delhi College', 1 July 1842, in *General Report of the Late General Committee of Public Instruction for 1840-41 and 1841-42*, App. XV, cxxv-xvi; Michael S. Dodson, 'Translating Science, Translating Empire: The Power of Language in Colonial North India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 47:4, (October 2005), p. 821.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Michael S. Dodson, 'Translating Science, Translating Empire, (October 2005), p. 821.

inherent in European intellectuals than in those of the indigenous population.²⁶ This viewpoint was strengthened by the argument that a lack of qualified 'native' instructors and a scarcity of suitable educational materials in the vernacular further exacerbated the challenge.²⁷ Consequently, this situation created a cyclical pattern, believed to be breakable only through intervention by Europeans.²⁸

Margrit Pernau, in her scholarly analysis, highlights a series of reports from the Delhi Gazette that underscore a significant observation. Specifically, in an entry dated April 25, 1838, the Delhi Gazette articulated that within the discourse on "native education" in Delhi, the prevailing dynamics were not primarily manifested as a stark dichotomy between proponents of oriental and Western knowledge. Instead, it represented a nuanced debate between advocates endorsing the propagation of Western values through English and those asserting a crucial objective of advancing both the cultivation of vernacular languages and the dissemination of European thoughts and ideas.²⁹ This dissemination aimed to be coupled with an emphasis on logical reasoning and the spirit of inquiry. Advocates for instruction in Urdu argued that such an approach had the potential to influence the Indian intellect in a way that couldn't be achieved through the medium of English, even if it incurred certain associated costs. Notably, the core emphasis of the reform initiatives at Delhi College did not revolve around a purely aesthetic appreciation for the Urdu language or an unequivocal support for oriental studies. Instead, it was grounded in the conviction that by incentivizing scholars to produce translations, subsequently publishing and integrating them into the educational curriculum, a gradual stimulation of the indigenous intellect would occur. This approach was anticipated to usher in a phase of intellectual vitality previously unprecedented in the Indian context. The focus wasn't merely on language or traditional studies but rather on the strategic use of translations and curriculum integration to foster a

²⁶ IOR, *General Report on Public Instruction*, 1843-44, p. 7; Michael S. Dodson, 'Translating Science, Translating Empire,' (October 2005), p. 822.

²⁷ IOR, 4 'Minute of F. Boutros', 10 January 1844, in *General Report on Public Instruction 1843-44*, Appendix. N, lxxii-xi.

²⁸ Michael S. Dodson, 'Translating Science, Translating Empire,' (October 2005), p. 822.

²⁹ In either 1828 or 1829, Nawab Itimad al-Dowlah, a prominent figure in the Awadh court, initiated the establishment of a novel waqf, specifying that its proceeds were to be dedicated to the advancement of oriental scholarship in his hometown, Delhi. This significant move preceded the rise of Anglicist ideology, as showcased in Macaulay's renowned Minute on Education, by less than a decade. It illustrates how influential figures in Northern India showed no apparent hesitation toward the cultural impact of British administrative educational strategies during that period. Expressing gratitude for the Nawab's generous contribution, the East India Company responded to this initiative by suggesting that instead of founding a new educational institution, the funds from the endowment could be effectively utilized to strengthen the existing educational framework of the oriental section of Delhi College. Consequently, the local committee in Delhi directed the resources from the Nawab's waqf toward the oriental division of Delhi College. Simultaneously, a portion of governmental resources was reallocated to support the Anglo-vernacular segment of the institution. This strategic use of funds aimed to enhance both the traditional oriental studies and the newer Anglo-vernacular educational facets within Delhi College. See Gail Minault, 'Qiran Al-Sa'Adain: The Dialogue Between Eastern and Western Learning at Delhi College,' in *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History 1760-1860*, edited by Jamal Malik, (Brill, 2000), pp. 263-264.

renewed intellectual dynamism within Indian scholarship.³⁰

As previously outlined, Boutros's endeavour to translate English educational materials into Urdu received official approval and played a significant role in the reports on public instruction by the NWP Government during the early 1840s. By 1844, before Boutros's departure from Delhi College, it became evident that his strategies had a substantial impact, possibly laying the groundwork for the government's policy on vernacular publication. During this time, there was a notable increase in Urdu textbooks emanating from Delhi, published by either the college or the Agra School Book Society.³¹ Documentation from this era highlights that the majority of educational texts on practical subjects in the North Western Provinces were authored in Urdu.³² The escalation in publications spurred the NWP Government to set up a centralized repository in Agra to manage and distribute educational materials, functioning as a comprehensive resource hub for educational officials. This repository served as a consolidated source for the dissemination and availability of educational materials, marking a significant step in promoting vernacular education in the region.³³

During the mid-1840s, a significant development occurred with the emergence of Urdu periodicals originating from the Government's colleges in Delhi and Agra, most notably the *Qiran al-Sa'adain*.³⁴ These journals became known for their comprehensive discussions covering scientific and

³⁰ NAI, Delhi Gazette, December 10, 1842; see Margrit Pernau (ed.), *The Delhi College*, (New Delhi, 2006) with Anu Kumar, 'New Lamps for Old', (2007), p. 1712.

³¹ "The annual General Report on Public Instruction regularly featured an appendix that listed titles published in the preceding year, attributing them to either Delhi College or the Agra School Book Society. This appendix served as a comprehensive catalogue of educational materials and publications, offering an overview of the recent contributions made by these institutions to the realm of education in the region". See, for example, "Appendix A" in IOR, *General Report on Public Instruction in the North-Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency, for 1844-45*, (Agra, 1846).

³² "The availability of Hindi books for educators in the North Western Provinces (NWP) was notably smaller compared to Urdu publications. Additionally, Hindi books accessible during that period often had an older publication date. For instance, Adam's translation of Stewart's Historical Anecdotes, initially presented as "Upadesa Katha" in a 1825 publication from Calcutta, continued to be offered in 1844 as a standard Hindi text in the NWP. This highlights that while Hindi books were accessible, their quantity was limited compared to Urdu publications, and some texts remained unchanged and available over an extended period". See, IOR, *General Report on Public Instruction 1843-44*, App. S, 'List of Books in Hindi generally used in schools and Colleges of the North-Western Provinces'.

³³ "In September 1844, the Rev. J. J. Moore, holding the position of Urdu Translator to Government and serving as the Secretary of the Agra School Book Society, was additionally appointed as the Curator of School Books. This appointment likely reflected Moore's extensive involvement and expertise in Urdu translation and educational publications, leading to his expanded role in overseeing and curating school-related literature and materials". See, IOR, *General Report on Public Instruction in the North-Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1844-45*, pp. 2-3; also, Appendix B of the same report, which reprints a letter from J. Thornton, Secretary to Government NWP, to Rev. J. Moore, 2 Sept. 1844, pp. ii-iii.

³⁴ "The publication of the journal *Qiran al-Sa'adain* and its significance in the dialogue between Eastern and Western learning at Delhi College is explored in Gail Minault's work titled *Qiran al-Sa'adain: The Dialogue Between Eastern and Western Learning at Delhi College*'. This scholarly work likely delves into the role and impact of this journal in fostering a discourse that bridged the realms of Eastern and Western knowledge within

various subject matters in Urdu, aiming to disseminate information about a wide array of practical European innovations. By this time, Urdu had risen as the primary vernacular channel for sharing 'practical' knowledge.³⁵ The cities of Delhi and Agra, boasting sizable Muslim populations and Urdu-speaking communities, evolved into pivotal centres for translating, publishing, and distributing educational materials.³⁶ However, the departure of Felix Boutros from his role as Superintendent of Delhi College in 1845 led to a decline in the momentum behind Urdu translational efforts. Towards the latter part of the 1840s, with a surplus of 'improved-Urdu' textbooks accumulating at the NWP Government's book depository, the focus on producing textbooks and translation efforts shifted to the city of Banaras. This transition marked a shift in the locus of Urdu educational material production and dissemination from Delhi and Agra to Banaras.³⁷

During its apex from the 1840s to the 1860s, Delhi College epitomized a convergence point between British and Indo-Muslim cultures, a synergy significantly facilitated by the adoption of Urdu as its primary medium of instruction. The groundwork for this convergence was laid in the early 19th century, several madrasas in Delhi had embarked on initiatives to reinterpret classical knowledge and traditions during that period. Efforts to contemporize knowledge had already begun before the British consolidated their political and cultural authority over northern India in the early 1800s. Delhi College assumed a pivotal role in advancing Urdu prose, emerging as a hub for scientific education and making substantial contributions to scientific literature. Through its vernacular translation society, it acted as a vital link between eastern and western cultural realms, playing a significant role in creating an Urdu-speaking and literate audience across diverse religious affiliations.³⁸ Moreover, by adapting the traditional academic curriculum, the college cultivated an environment conducive to liberal thought and the nurturing of a spirit of rationality among its students and within its academic milieu.

The Delhi College faced criticism, notably from Syed Hamid Ali Khan, the son-in-law of a benefactor whose substantial endowment played a significant role in the institution's establishment and sustenance. A generous contribution of 1,70,000 Rupees from Nawab Itamad ul Dawlah, a former minister to the King of Awadh, had greatly supported the college.³⁹ The institution also received substantial backing from funds designated by an Indian nobleman to promote Islamic education in Delhi.⁴⁰ However, alterations introduced within the college did not align with the intentions of progressive benefactors who had provided financial support. Syed Hamid Ali, representing the late

the educational environment of Delhi College", see, Jamal Malik (ed.) *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History, 1760-1860*, Brill, Leiden, 2000. The publication of the Urdu periodical is first suggested by Boutros in 'Minute of F. Boutros', 10 January 1844, in *General Report on Public Instruction 1843-44*.

³⁵ IOR, *General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1845-46*, (Agra, 1847), p. 5.

³⁶ Michael S. Dodson, 'Translating Science, Translating Empire', (October 2005), p. 822-23.

³⁷ Rajendra Lal Mitra notes that Boutros translations "never were touched beyond the four walls of the college premises". See Rajendra Lal Mitra, *A Scheme for the Rendering of European Scientific Terms into the Vernaculars of India*, (Calcutta, 1877), p. 4.

³⁸ Margrit Pernau (ed.), *The Delhi College*, (New Delhi, 2006).

³⁹ IOR, Bengal, Public, 24 August, 1831, draft 579/1830-31; IOR/E/4/733, pp 341-69.

⁴⁰ IOR, India, Public, V4. 1846/77633, Draft no. 19, 1835-1839.

Nawab Fazl Ali Khan and acting on behalf of the heirs, raised grievances concerning the institution's modifications. In response to Ali's concerns, the Government instructed the institution to maintain the original form of scholarships as intended by the patrons. Ali corresponded with the Government, expressing dissatisfaction with the college's arrangements and advocating for a more influential role for himself and the heirs. Although the Government recognized Ali's desires for greater control over the establishment, they were hesitant to concede complete authority. Instead, they directed the overseeing Committee to carefully consider Ali's suggestions, especially concerning the appointment of teachers, during their deliberations.⁴¹

In 1845, the educational institution saw a robust enrolment of 460 students, predominantly in the Oriental Section, where 418 students pursued their studies, including 245 individuals focusing on English language education. This diverse student body comprised 299 Hindus, 146 Muslims, and 15 Christians, reflecting a multicultural environment that embraced diversity and mutual accommodation, reflecting the social fabric of the city.⁴² However, the college faced significant upheavals, particularly on May 11, 1857, when insurgents attacked the institution, located in Kashmiri Gate. The assault arose from the perception that the college propagated Western education. Subsequently, following the suppression of the revolt, British authorities closed the college due to suspicions regarding the loyalties of both faculty and students. The institution resumed its operations in 1862 and enrolled students to sit for the entrance examination of Calcutta University. Over the following years, the college made strides, introducing intermediate, B.A., and M.A. classes between 1864 and 1871, achieving commendable academic success. Despite these advancements and strong objections from Delhi's citizens, the imperial government decided to shut down the college. This controversial move involved transferring the staff and library to Lahore, leading to vocal protests from the local community, underscoring the institution's significance and its impact on Delhi's educational landscape.⁴³

Educational Metamorphosis: Delhi College and its Influence on Intellectual Terrain

The closure of Delhi College in 1876, attributed primarily to financial constraints, coincided with the establishment of Punjab University, marking a significant transition in the region's higher education landscape.⁴⁴ However, the closure was also intertwined with lingering distrust among the British authorities toward the College's students following the Revolt. This pivotal event reshaped the

⁴¹ IOR, India, Public, IOR/E/4/781, 4 December 1844, no. 30, pp. 353-57.

⁴² <http://www.zakirhusaindelhicollege.ac.in/about-us/the-college-history/>

⁴³ Imran Khan, 'Perception and Use of Social Networking Sites by the Students of Zakir Husain Delhi College (University of Delhi), New Delhi,' *Journal of Advanced Research in Library and Information Science* 3, no. 1 (2016), pp.11-19.

⁴⁴ "The report on Delhi College noted a significant divergence in opinions among the consulted officers. Although some advocated for the amalgamation of colleges, the majority opposed it on the grounds that it would unjustly deprive the residents of Delhi, a significant and crucial city, of the benefits of a high-quality education offered by the college for numerous years. The suggestion put forward was to reinforce the staff strength of both colleges, addressing the acknowledged deficiency without amalgamation. Despite considering the arguments against abolishing Delhi College, the Lieutenant-Governor concluded that, due to the interests of higher education in the province and financial constraints, the merger of Lahore and Delhi Colleges should proceed". NAI, Home, Education, File no: Home, Education, August 1877, nos. 27-34, (1877), p. 1, also see F. F. Monk, *A History of St. Stephens College Delhi (1935)*, (Calcutta, 1935), p. Prefatory Note.

educational trajectory in India. Although financial insufficiency was the stated cause, the suspicions cast over the students after the Revolt cannot be disregarded.⁴⁵ Despite the College's closure, its impact resonated through subsequent colleges and educational frameworks, leaving an enduring imprint on intellectual and educational paradigms. Its legacy endured through the replication of its educational ideologies, the perpetuation of its intellectual heritage, and the inspiration it provided for the foundation and evolution of other educational institutions.

Following the dissolution of Delhi College, the pursuit of higher education demanded travel to Lahore, becoming a new centre for advanced studies. However, this shift led only a privileged few to the new educational hub. After the closure, a group of scholars migrated to Lahore College, with several individuals assuming key roles that significantly impacted various spheres. For instance, Umrao Singh assumed the esteemed position of Inspector of Schools. Dwarka Das advanced to the Principalship at Patiala College and later forged a distinguished career in law. Meanwhile, Girdhari Lal and Jugal Kishore emerged as leading legal advocates in Delhi. Furthermore, Mohammad Hussain's achievements saw him secure membership in the Council of Kashmir, where he served as a Sessions Judge. These examples underscore the substantial professional strides made by former affiliates of Delhi College subsequent to their integration into Lahore College.⁴⁶

The dissolution of Delhi College resulted in the migration of its academic staff to Lahore, with notable figures such as Messrs. J. Sime, B.A., and R. Dick, M.A., formerly associated with Delhi College, moving to Lahore College. Following this transition, Mr. J.W. Johnstone also joined Lahore College's faculty. Mr. Dick took on a crucial responsibility as the first Principal of the newly established Central Training College, marking a pivotal development in the educational landscape. Addressing the necessity for a Professor of Natural Science, Mr. J.C. Oman was appointed in the same year. Dr. Sime, transitioning from Delhi College to Lahore College, saw his career trajectory advance significantly as he rose to the positions of Principal and later Director of Public Instruction. Mr. Dick's role as the first Principal of the Central Training College highlighted the strategic importance of integrating skilled personnel from Delhi College into Lahore College's academic environment. The addition of Mr. J.C. Oman as a Professor of Natural Science further diversified the academic expertise offered by the institution, meeting the growing demand for a comprehensive educational curriculum.⁴⁷

The integration of esteemed individuals from Delhi College into the academic framework of Lahore College played a vital role in filling crucial faculty gaps and introducing diverse knowledge and teaching methodologies. This amalgamation represented a continuation of academic traditions while ushering in a new era of educational leadership and expertise in Lahore. Dr. Sime's subsequent rise to the roles of Principal and Director of Public Instruction illustrated the transformative impact of staff migration, significantly contributing to shaping and administering Lahore College and its broader educational landscape. Ultimately, the convergence of scholarly talent from Delhi to Lahore College following Delhi College's closure symbolized a strategic shift in academic excellence, fostering an enriched academic environment and showcasing the seamless transfer of expertise and leadership in the field of education.

The impact of Delhi College extended to Dar al-'Ulum Deoband, established in 1866 as a distinguished Islamic seminary known for its emphasis on traditional Islamic education. This institution

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁶ H. L. O. Garrett (ed.), *A History of Government College Lahore, 1864-1914*, (Lahore, 1914), p.34.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

prioritized classical Islamic sciences, focusing on jurisprudence (fiqh), Quranic studies (tafsir), Hadith, and theology (aqeedah). Notably, individuals who had studied or taught at Delhi College significantly influenced the developmental trajectory of Dar al-'Ulum. One prominent scholar among them was Imam Muhammad Qasim al-Nanautwi. During the establishment period of Dar al-'Ulum Deoband, traditional Islamic educational institutions in India were experiencing a notable decline, with only a few surviving in deteriorating conditions. Recognizing this precarious situation and the diminishing status of Islamic sciences, Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi and his associates identified the need for action. Understanding the historical importance of knowledge in shaping societies, they independently undertook the founding of Dar al-'Ulum Deoband. This initiative, operating without governmental support, relied on public contributions and collaborative efforts. Their primary objective was to rejuvenate and propagate Islamic scholarship, acknowledging the fundamental role of education in societal progress and development.⁴⁸

Mawlana Nanautwi pursued his education at Delhi College, focusing on mathematics and Euclidean Geometry. After completing his studies, he engaged in press correction work at Matba' Ahmadi in Delhi as a means of livelihood. In the early stages of Dar al-'Ulum, Mawlana al-Nanautwi conducted brief teachings on Euclidean geometry at Chatta Masjid.⁴⁹ During these sessions, when explaining geometric figures to students, he employed an intuitive approach. Using his finger as a tool, he drew figures without aids and accompanied the explanations with demonstrations. His lectures were primarily conducted within the premises of the printing press and attracted a select audience.⁵⁰

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's educational principles and initiatives were profoundly influenced by the legacy of Delhi College, despite his lack of formal enrolment in the institution. His close association with Imam Bakhsh Sahbaiy, a distinguished professor of Persian literature at the College, contributed significantly to shaping his educational vision. Sahbaiy not only assisted Sir Sayyid in gathering data for *Athar al-Sanadid* but also contributed to editing the prose in its initial edition. Moreover, following the upheavals of 1857, Sir Sayyid found unwavering support in Zaka Ullah and Nazir Ahmad, both graduates of Delhi College. These individuals emerged as fervent advocates of Sir Sayyid's endeavour to promote modern education among the Muslim populace. Together, this triumvirate served as conduits through which modern educational concepts were conveyed to Sir Sayyid until his European travels in 1869.⁵¹ The influence of Delhi College, mediated by Sir Sayyid's interactions with Sahbaiy, Zaka Ullah, and Ahmad, significantly informed and shaped his understanding and propagation of modern education within the Muslim community. Until 1868, Sir Sayyid remained committed to a policy of modern national educational experimentation, inspired by the insights gained from his involvement with Delhi

⁴⁸ Abd Allah bin Muhammad al-Afriqui, *Introducing Imam Muhammad Qasim al-Nanautwi*, (Johannesburg, 2013), p. 24.

⁴⁹ "Matba' Ahmadi in Delhi emerged as a prominent center for printing and disseminating Hadith literature, pioneering the printing of Hadith books in India. Notably, *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* (1848), *Sahih al-Bukhari* (1853), and *Mishkat al-Masabih* (1854) were meticulously published at this press. Established by Mawlana Ahmad in 1845 upon his return from Hijaz, it gained recognition for its rigorous production of Islamic texts. Following the upheaval of the 1857 revolt, the press relocated to Meerut. Copies of *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Mishkat al-Masabih*, printed by this press, are still preserved in Dar al-'Ulum's library. While the marginal notes likely originate from Mawlana Ahmad himself, the texts of the Hadith appear to have been transcribed by a copyist". See, *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵¹ Malik Hafeez, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan*, (New York, 1980), p. 53.

College. Nonetheless, practical challenges ultimately convinced him to advocate for the primary language of instruction being English.

Delhi College wielded a profound impact on the burgeoning print culture of Delhi. Functioning as a bastion of education and enlightenment, the institution nurtured intellectuals that later became influential in shaping the city's print landscape. Its alumni and faculty made substantial contributions to newspapers, journals, and literary works, infusing these mediums with scholarly insights and progressive ideas. The college's ethos of critical thinking and academic rigor permeated through the writings and publications, enhancing the quality and depth of Delhi's emerging print culture and imprinting it with a legacy of erudition and enlightenment. One remarkable output of Delhi College was the *Quran-al-Sa'dain*, a scholarly weekly periodical highly regarded within academic circles. This publication, consisting of 12 pages per edition, was overseen by Pandit Dharam Narayan Bhaskar, a distinguished senior scholar associated with the English Department. Bhaskar later transitioned to Malwa College, where he assumed the role of editor for the esteemed *Malwah Akbar* publication. His scholarly contributions extended across institutions, marking him as a notable figure in the domain of academic editorial pursuits within the intellectual landscape of his time.⁵²

Master Ram Chander's illustrated fortnightly, *Fawair-al-Nazerin*, held a clear aim of familiarizing its readership with contemporary Western ideas. The publication's initial editions were printed at the press of Delhi Urdu Akhbar, situated within Maulvi Muhammad Baqar's residence.⁵³ Distinguishing itself from other contemporary newspapers and periodicals, this publication aimed solely at scholarly pursuits and the revitalization of erudition. In the words of Master Ram Chander himself:

“This paper has been issued for the benefit of those who do not possess the advantage of learning and not for those who have been educated at a place of higher learning. It is therefore necessary that herein only such articles should be published as could be understood by the former class of people”.⁵⁴

Within his fortnightly publication, Master Ram Chander delved into diverse social concerns, notably advocating for women's education and expressing fervent opinions on liberal ideologies. However, the periodical faced significant challenges due to being far ahead of its time. The prevailing societal landscape of the mid-nineteenth century lacked a liberal perspective and was characterized by staunch resistance to change and entrenched traditionalism. This conservatism made the publication's vision incongruent with the times, as it aimed to embrace constitutional politics and promote modern scientific education. As a result, the journal encountered formidable obstacles, given the stark misalignment between its forward-looking aspirations and the prevailing conservative milieu.

Conclusion

The establishment of Delhi College in 1825 marked a significant milestone in India's educational history under British colonial rule. Inspired by Oxbridge traditions, the college became a beacon of Western-style education, offering a diverse curriculum spanning humanities and sciences. Its closure in 1876 due to administrative and financial challenges was indeed a watershed moment, but its impact transcended its physical existence. Delhi College's legacy extended far beyond its closure. The educational approach

⁵² Nadir Ali Khan, *A History of Urdu Journalism (1822-1857)*, (Delhi, 1991), p. 138.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

and curriculum it embraced became a model for subsequent institutions across India. The emphasis on a comprehensive education encompassing both liberal arts and sciences remained a hallmark of many colleges that followed, reflecting Delhi College's commitment to a holistic learning experience. Its foundational principles of critical thinking, intellectual inquiry, and interdisciplinary learning persisted in the ethos of newer educational establishments. Moreover, the influence of Delhi College endured through its alumni, who played pivotal roles in academia, governance, and public service. They carried forward the institution's ideals, contributing significantly to intellectual discourse and societal development. The closure of Delhi College created a void, prompting the rise of alternative institutions that embraced its commitment to academic excellence and innovation. This period of change catalyzed by Delhi College's closure ignited a spirit of educational reform across India. New institutions emerged, inspired by the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment. Beyond academia, this transformative era stimulated broader cultural and intellectual awakenings in colonial India. In essence, while the physical existence of Delhi College ceased in 1876, its legacy lived on. It acted as a catalyst for educational advancement and societal change, leaving an indelible mark on the educational landscape and contributing to the cultural and intellectual renaissance of the time.

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