



**TRAINING OF FEMALE TEACHERS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 20TH CENTURY IN BRITISH INDIA (1900-1947)**

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**Abstract**

The training of female teachers had always been occupied an important place in the history of teacher education of pre-independent India. The system of training and certificating of female teachers was based on that for male teachers in British India. But the scarcity of trained qualified teachers was a major difficulty in the way of female education, which in turn was responsible for the slow progress of female education. The journey of female teachers’ training started in the second half of nineteenth century, but a slow and steady development in the field took place from the beginning of twentieth century. There were separate training institutions, university departments of education for the training women teachers. Sometimes training classes were attached to other colleges. In some training colleges for male, there was provision for female students also. The progress of training of female teachers in different provinces of pre-independent India was not same. However, in general a sharp growth had been observed both in the number of training institutions and number of trainee students at the end of the period. On the basis of primary sources province wise development of female teachers’ training has been discussed in the present paper from a historical view point.

**Keywords:** Female Teachers’ Training, Pre-independence period.

**1. Introduction**

The system of training and certificating of female teachers was based on that for male teachers in British India. But the scarcity of trained qualified teachers was a major difficulty in the way of female education. It had been stated in the Fifth Quinquennial Review (1902-07) that “training institution for women are doing more than they have formerly done to supply this deficiency, but the outturn of trained teachers from them is still quite inadequate. There is no lack of demand for their services when they have been trained, but the profession does not attract them,.....”.(page 238) The report of Miss. Brock, the Inspectress of schools in Bengal, reflected this view in the following way: “The great obstacle to the furtherance of female education still remains, I am convinced, the want of female teachers.” The journey of female teachers’ training started in the second half of nineteenth century, but a slow but steady development in the field took place from the beginning of twentieth century. There were separate training institutions, university department of education for women teachers. The progress of training of female teachers in different provinces of pre-independent India was not same. On the basis of primary sources province wise development of female teachers’ training has been discussed in the present paper from a historical view point.

**2. General Scenario of Women Teachers’ Training as Revealed From Various Quinquennial Reviews on Education**

**2.1 Fifth Quinquennial Review (1902-1907):** The number of female students under training was 1,456 in 1907. The distribution is shown in the following table:

Type of Institution	Number of Female Students
Training Colleges for Men	6
Training Colleges for Women	30
Training Schools for Masters	153
Training Schools for Mistresses	1267

Source: Fifth Quinquennial Review (1902-1907), page239

Among the 6 female students in training colleges for male 5 students were at Madras and 1 student was at Allahabad. There was one female student in training college at Madras and 29 female students were in Punjab, at the two training colleges for European women. The number of training schools for women increased from 46, in the beginning of the 1902, to 63 at the end of 1907. In 1901, all the local governments were asked, wherever possible, to increase the training facilities for female by establishing additional normal schools and by encouraging private initiative in training. During that time there existed only 8 normal schools for female. These schools were located at Madras (5 schools), Bombay (2 schools) and Central Provinces (1 School). The normal school at Vizagapatam was closed. In 1907, the number of Government school reached at 12. The new training schools were opened at Dharwar in Bombay, at Dow Hill, Kursheong, at Lucknow and Lahore. A second normal class had been started at Nagpur. The following table shows the province wise statistics of Government normal classes and number of pupils there in:



Province	Name of the Institution	Number of Pupils
Madras	Presidency Training School, Madras	57
	Hobart Muhammadan Training School, Madras	5
	Coimbatore Training School	29
	Calicut Moyan Training School	19
Bombay	Poona Training College	87
	Mahalaxmi Training College, Ahmedabad	117
	Dharwar Training College	23
Bengal	Dow Hill Training School	20
United Provinces	Lucknow Normal School	41
Punjab	Lahore Normal School	72
Central Provinces	Normal School, Jubbulpore	36
	Normal School, Amaraoti	

Source: Fifth Quinquennial Review (1902-07), page 240

All the new institutions, opened later, had been successful in overcoming the difficulty to obtain suitable candidates for training. The number of training schools under private management had increased from 34 to 48 during the period 1902-07. It was decided that Dharwar training institution would be raised to the standard of colleges at Ahmedabad and Poona. The training school at Dow Hill imparted training to European female students. It was decided to open two training colleges at Calcutta and Bankipore for mistresses. For this purpose, from Bengal two ladies were deputed in England for training to take charge of these two institutions. Regarding the normal school at Lahore the Director reported that, "this much-needed school was established in Lahore on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1905. The school showed a marked advance, and is now in all respect in good working order." (Fifth Review page 241).

**2.2 Sixth Quinquennial Review (1907-12):** As per the Sixth Quinquennial Review in 1912, there were 85 institutions for the training of female teachers which were 63 in 1907. The number of pupils also increased from 1278 in 1907 to 1508 in 1912. Of these 63 institutions, 24 were under Government management, 3 were managed by local bodies, 1 school was under the native state of Bombay and 57 (49 aided) schools were run by the missionaries mainly. According to the review, "the most complete arrangements are in Madras and Bombay, each of which has over 400 pupils under training. Bengal has no institution for training secondary mistresses; the vernacular training classes (with the exception of two government schools) are generally managed by missions. Eastern Bengal and Assam had no arrangements of any kind; but government classes were established both for primary and secondary teachers at Dacca during the quinquennium and mission bodies in Assam are being encouraged to open classes. The United Provinces had some good institutions, notably the Isabella Thoburn Normal School at Lucknow. The Punjab has a government school at Lahore and classes attached to secondary schools. In Burma there are four aided mission schools. In the Central Provinces there are two government colleges." (Page 224)

**2.3 Seventh Quinquennial Review Vol I 1912-17, page 180-181:** "There are three colleges for the training of women. These are the Diocesan College and the Loreto House School in Calcutta, which are also arts colleges, and St. Bede's College at Simla. These colleges contain 49 students and seven more are studying in men's colleges. There are also 111 training schools for women with 2,651 students, while 106 women are reading in schools for men. There are no training institutions for women in the NWFP, and Bengal is peculiarly backward in respect of training arrangements. Training facilities were commenced during the quinquennium at Delhi where a government institution was opened, in Assam where two mission classes were started, and in Ajmer-Merwara where a normal class has been opened under a mission at Nasirabad. Among the 31 schools maintained by the government are nine institutions in Madras, the divisional vernacular training colleges for women in Bombay, the classes at the Eden High School, Dacca, the Lahore Normal school for women, the Badshah Nawab Razvi Training College at Bankipore and the two government normal schools in the Central Provinces. But most of the schools are of aided type and are largely maintained by missions." (Seventh Quinquennial Review Vol I 1912-17, page 180-181).

**2.4 The Eighth Quinquennial Review (1917-1922)** showed total 51 schools and classes for female teachers. Out of these 51 schools and classes, 13 were under State management and 38 were under private management. Almost all the schools under the State were managed by Government. There were two Board schools or classes, one each at Bombay and Punjab, and a Native State school was also there in Bombay. Facilities for training of women teachers continued to be inadequate till 1930s, though there was an increase in the number of training colleges and normal and training schools.



**2.5 Ninth Quinquennial Review (1922-1927):** As per the Ninth Quinquennial Review, “there is a direct relationship between the progress of female education and the number of women under training in all most all the provinces, the only exceptions being the United Provinces and Assam. Madras, Burma, and Bombay which have a fairly large proportion of women under training, are far ahead of other provinces in the matter of female education.” (page184). Again it was stated in the report of 1928-29 that “of all educational objects on which money could be spent none is so deserving as the provision of adequate facilities for the training of teachers for girls’ schools. Projects are ready but the funds are not forthcoming.” (Page 39) “There is no doubt however but that the spirit of emancipation and independence which is fast growing among women in India tends to make them to take teaching as an obvious means of earning their own livelihood.” (Education in India 1923-24 page 40) But the training of female teachers was mainly under the missionary management. Most of the cases arrangements in these private managed institutions were more “definite and precise than in the Government colleges and schools for male teachers”. (Eighth Quinquennial Review 1917-22 Vol.II page 218) Sometimes small classes were attached to schools for general education where instruction was given. The aims of a women training school had been well explained by the Inspectress in the following way:

“The training school does not aim at producing the type of teacher who, when armed with a departmental certificate, will think that she has reached the summit of human knowledge and will do the minimum amount of work on the maximum amount of pay. Neither does it aim at turning out fine ladies who will think household work beneath them. It aims rather at turning out women who will be really useful members of society and will grace any sphere they may be called upon to occupy, who will be imbued with ideals of honesty, self-sacrifice and devotion to duty and who will realize the dignity, responsibility and nobility of their profession.” (Education in India 1928-29 page39)

“The output of trained women teachers has, however, steadily increased. During the quinquennium the number of women under instruction in training colleges increased from 67 to 132 and the number of women in normal and training schools increased from 4391 to 4922. These figures are certainly small in comparison to the total demand for trained women teachers, but they compare favourably with the figures for 25 years ago, which show that there were only 11 women under instruction in training college and 1412 in normal and training schools. The dearth of women teachers is due to a great extent to the social systems prevailing in India, and the difficulties in the way obtaining an adequate supply of women teachers are still and likely to remain very great.” (Ninth Review Vol. I page 158)

**2.7 Tenth Review (page 187):** “Five years ago, the Hartog Committee pointed out that the provision of only seven training colleges for women (most of which did not teach up to the degree standard) for all India, of which five are located in two provinces, is most inadequate. Even more depressing is the enrolment of only 115 students in these colleges.

The following Table shows that very little has been done in most provinces to reduce this deficiency and that therefore further advance in secondary education of girls must be retarded by the dearth of trained women graduates.

Considerable progress has been made by the Lady Willington Training College for Women in Madras. One hundred and four graduates applied for admission in 1931-32 as against 31 in 1927-28, the number selected in those years being 36 and 31 respectively. An interesting feature of the quinquennium has been the institution of a physical training diploma class in 1928; and the introduction of domestic science in 1929 as one of the special subjects prescribed by the University for the L.T. course has led to greater emphasis being placed on this subject in girls’ schools to its being made a compulsory subject in the revised S.S.L.C. scheme.

**2.8 Eleventh Quinquennial Review (1932-37):** During 1932-37, the training schools for female increased from 209 in 1932 to 217 in 1937. The enrolment was 7609 in 1937. The number of students under training in different provinces is shown in the following table,

Province	Enrolment
Madras	3,558
Bombay	946
Bengal	287
Bihar	234
Assam	33

Sources Eleventh Quinquennial Review (1932-37), page 167

It had been mentioned in the review “that in many provinces adequate facilities are not available for the training of women teachers. This is an important matter which should receive the serious attention of the responsible authorities.” (Page167)“It is evident that the provision for the training of women teachers for secondary schools is not keeping pace with the rapid expansion of girls’ education.” (page175)



### **3. Development of Teachers' Training for Females in the first half of 20th Century in Various Provinces of British India (1900-1947)**

**3.1 Madras:** The largest number of female training schools belonged to Madras Presidency. The standard of arrangement was same as the male training institutions. Pupils from private managed schools were sent up for the Government teachers' examinations. The Government Upper Secondary Presidency Training School at Madras was the largest female teachers' training institution in the Madras Presidency. Three lower secondary schools were also managed by the Government. During the period 1922-27, a small Government Muhammadan class was opened at Vizagapatnam and two mission schools at Black Town and Mausulipatam were closed. The provision for the collegiate training of women teachers was a temporary L.T. class attached to the Lady Willington School prior to 1922. The L.T. class was recognized permanently as the Lady Willington Training College in 1923 and in 1924 by the recognition of the St. Christopher's Mission Training College, the provision of collegiate training facilities for women were greatly increased in Madras. The Lady Willington Training College organized the first Diploma Course for women in Physical Training in 1928 and Domestic Science as special subject was introduced in 1929. Five new aided training schools were started during 1922-27. The number of women under training was increasing, but it was reported that "there are still nine districts in the Presidency without training schools for women and that the existing shortage of trained women teachers has been due more to the absence of local facilities for training than to the difficulty of obtaining candidates for admission to training institutions." (Ninth Quinquennial Review 1922-27, page 185) In 1937, there were 3,558 women were under training which was "about half of the total number of women under training in the whole of British India." (Eleventh Review page 167)

**3.2 Bombay:** In the Bombay Presidency there were two Government training colleges at Poona and Ahmedabad, three Board schools at Dharwar, Karachi and Hyderabad and a Native State college at Rajkot in Kathiawar. Resident quarters were provided in both the Government colleges. The aided institutions comprised classes attached to three European schools. The Bombay Education Society used to maintain a small normal class at Hyderabad. A normal class was attached to the Girgaum Girls' School and the Native State School at Kolhapur during 1922-27. Mention had been made in the Ninth Quinquennial Review (1922-27) about ten existing aided institutions conducted by the Christian Missionaries and by the Seva Sadan. The recognition of training college attached to the Indian Womens' University, Poona by the Government was under consideration till 1932. In one of the Government institutions training class for Urdu teachers was opened at Poona during the period 1922-27. In 1930-31 the Urdu Normal class for Muslims developed into an Urdu Training School for Girls. One more class for the senior first year candidates was added to it. The Eleventh Review stated that in Bombay "facilities for training women compare very favourably with those for training men." (Page167).

**3.3 Bengal:** "On the mission side the output from the training classes during the last three years has been extremely promising, both in the number of trained teachers and their improved quality. In the training classes for Brahmos attached to the Brahmo Girls' School, Calcutta, the numbers are very small, and the quality of the training distinctly inferior to that given in the mission training classes." (Fifth Review, page238) Bengal had 9 mission schools which intended to supply teachers for the schools associated with the various mission societies. These were mainly schools for general education, but they were called training schools "on the ground that some of the students brought up in them are designed for employment as teachers." (page219). From the Ninth Quinquennial Review (1922-27) it is found that till 1927, there was only one institution in Bengal which prepared Indian Women Teachers for the B.T. degree. Of the total number (10) of training schools for women, three schools had been managed by the Government. Rests of the schools were managed by the Christian and Brahmo Mission. The Government Muslim Women Teachers' Training School was reorganized and it was placed on a permanent basis. The strength of the Government Vernacular Training School at Dacca was increased. Need for a training college for women was highlighted in the report 1928-29. During 1933-34 Bengal had three training colleges (training department attached to colleges) for women. The two colleges were the Scottish Church College, Loreto House, Calcutta and the third one was for the Anglo-Indian and European Women. Still, "the facilities for the training of women teachers in the province are very meagre indeed, even more so than in the case of men. The output of trained women teachers is thus very small and unless the schools are improved and their numbers increased, it will be exceedingly difficult to train an adequate number of women teachers for the province for many years to come." (Eleventh Review page 167) The statement made in the report for the year 1938-39 is noteworthy: "Bengal appears to be the best equipped of the provinces with training colleges but in fact it possesses no Government training college for the training of Indian women graduates, and the training departments attached to Scottish Church College and Loreto House, Calcutta (the third is for Anglo-Indian and European Women) do not adequately meet the needs of the province. In a province where so many women proceed to a degree, it is unfortunate that more effective steps are not taken to persuade a larger number to train for the teaching profession." (Education in India 1938-39 page102)

**3.4 United Provinces:** The normal school belonged to the Church Missionary Society at Sagra, Benaras was the main institution for training of female teachers. The school had a regular curriculum and used to impart a good course of practical



training. As per the Director's opinion "it does good and useful work, but as a matter of fact only turns out Christian teachers, though willing to receive and train others." (page 219). A training class for European female teachers was attached to the All Saints Girls' School at Nainital in 1897. At the European Girls' High School at Allahabad a training class was attached for some time. The American Methodist Mission School at Lucknow was one of the most prominent aided schools in the United Provinces. It had an Anglo-vernacular course. Arrangements were made to open a Government school at Lucknow at the end of the quinquennium (1917-22). Women teachers were admitted for the preparation of L.T. examination in the Training College attached to the Allahabad University. In 1924, a training class of one year for the graduates was opened in the Isabella Thoburn College for the preparation of B.T. degree of Lucknow University. Majority of the women under training admitted in this college. In 1927-28, the enrolment in this department was small, "partly because there are few recruits available and partly because the demand is limited." (Education in India 1927-28 page 35) But there was a great demand for admission in the three normal schools for girls which exceeded the vacancies. The need was to open at least two normal schools for girls urgently. But "there are no prospects that funds for the purposes will be available." (Education in India 1928-29 page 39) New regulations were framed for training of women teachers in European schools. A three years' course including a training course and additional study for the preparation of Cambridge Higher Certificate Examination, was added. The Benaras Hindu University Training College provided facilities for the training of women teachers. It admitted "graduates of the Benares Hindu University and, with special permission, graduates of other universities." (Education in India 1929-30 page 38) The Government Training College, Allahabad also admitted the women graduates. The provincial report said that "the provision of more facilities for women teachers is one of the most urgent educational needs of the United Provinces." Further regarding the unsatisfactory condition of the vernacular training schools it had been mentioned that "a number of candidates were refused admission to E.T.C. and V.T.C. classes for lack of vacancies. The staff and pupils continue to work with exemplary patience in deplorable conditions. A scheme for expansion was ready, but owing to lack of funds no progress could be made." (Education in India 1929-30 page 38) In 1932, the Lady Irwin College was established in New Delhi by the All-India Women's Conference on Educational Reform. A three years' course was imparted in the college to those who intended to qualify themselves as High School Teachers of Home Science.

**3.5 Punjab:** Punjab did not have any training school for women teachers till 1927 due to the Parda system mainly and partly because of backwardness in the field of female education. However, normal classes were attached to 5 of the ordinary girls' school. Among these 5 schools, one was Board school and four schools were managed privately. Girls were prepared for the certificate examinations prescribed for female teachers in these schools. The schools were visited frequently by the Inspectress of Schools to see whether the schools were conducted efficiently or not. It had been mentioned in a letter of the Punjab Government dated 13<sup>th</sup> July, 1900 that "the plan is not an entirely satisfactory one, and yields only a very small addition yearly to the number of trained teachers....." The only important feature for the period 1922-27 "was the replacement of separate training schools by training classes attached to the more important Government girls' high school." (Ninth Review 186). In 1923-24, Government Normal Schools for women at Gujranwala and Sialkot were closed. A junior class to the Lyallpur High School was attached. In the report of 1927-28 it was stated that "in the Punjab a training college for women teachers is required to provide better qualified mistresses and teachers of domestic science, games mistresses, art and music mistresses and fully trained kindergarten teachers, so that all schools may gradually be able to employ an efficient staff." (Education in India 1927-28 page 35) During, 1932-37 one more training college for mistresses was opened in Punjab. As a result, the enrolment of female teachers under training increased from 36 in 1932 to 119 in 1937.

**3.6 Central Provinces:** Female normal school in the Central Provinces was maintained by the Government at Jubbulpore. The Director in 1900 A.D. reported some defects of the school like absence of mistresses of method, unsuitable condition of the school building.

**3.7 Bihar and Orissa:** In 1923 and 1927 two Government Training schools for women were opened at Gaya and Bhagalpur respectively. It was reported that "there is an increasing demand for trained women teachers from every quarter. No real progress can be expected in the teaching and organization of girls' schools unless trained women teachers replace the old and untrained male teachers in them." (Eleventh Review, page 167).

**3.8 Assam:** Till 1927 there were only two training schools for mistresses in Assam, which was "quite inadequate for the province." in the Eleventh Review it had been found that "the only institutions for the training of women teachers are the Mission Schools at Silchar and Nowgong. Without wishing to detract in the least from the splendid work done by the Welsh and American ladies in these schools I cannot help feeling that it is high time that Government should open a Government training school for women in each valley.....I believe that if Government training schools for women were established, the demand for admission would exceed the capacity of the school." (page 167).

**3.9 Ajmer-Merwara:** The only local provision for the training of women teachers was the training class, attached to the Christian Girls' School at Nasirabad.



#### 4. Conclusion

From the above discussion it has been observed that, there had been a strong relation between female education and training of female teachers. Both were complimentary to each other. In various reports of Government this fact had been recognized. Problem of getting female students for training had gradually been overcome. The rate of progress of female teachers' training differed from province to province. In the field of women teachers' training the leading role was played by Madras. There was a sharp growth both in the number of training institutions for female and enrolment of female students for training, which are shown in the following two tables. The total number of training schools and training colleges for females during 1946-47 was 206 and 18 respectively.

**Training Schools for Females 1946-47**

Provinces	Number of Schools	Enrolment	Number of males included in previous column
Assam	5	99	
Bengal	10	225	
Bihar	10	282	
Bombay	32	1,815	13
Central Province and Berar	9	555	-
Madras	85	6,170	2
North West Frontier Province	1	68	-
Orissa	3	48	
Punjab	16	626	-
Sind	3	116	-
United Province	25	607	
Ajmer-Merwara	2	59	-
Baluchistan	-	-	-
Bangalore	2	49	-
Coorg	-	-	-
Delhi	1	41	-
Minor Administration	2	75	-

**Training Colleges for Females 1946-47**

Provinces	Number of Colleges	Enrolment ***	Number of males included in previous column ***
Assam	-	***	***
Bengal	2	33	-
Bihar	-	-	-
Bombay	-	-	-
Central Province and Berar	1	54	-
Madras	4	147	-
North West Frontier Province	-	-	-
Orissa	-	-	-
Punjab	8	376	-
Sind	-	-	-
United Province	3	125	-
Ajmer-Merwara	-	-	-
Baluchistan	-	-	-
Bangalore	-	-	-
Coorg	-	-	-
Delhi	-	-	-
Minor Administration	-	-	-

\*\*\*Excludes 9 students of B.T. classes of St. Mary's Arts College for Women, Shillong



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