

Development of Modern Education System in Etawah by A.O. Hume

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ABSTRACT

Hume's concept of combining public and private collaboration to advance education remains sound and useful. Hume's serious and honest efforts were the reason that during his tenure, primary education on contemporary terms achieved a high point. By the time he departed Etawah, there were 32 schools operating by 1856, 142 by 1863-1864 and a sizable student body was enrolled in them. The circumstances under which he made it happen, rather than the quantity of schools opened or pupils enrolled during his period, are what make his efforts so tremendous. According to Brahandeo Mishra's A History of Secondary Education in Uttar Pradesh, "The upheaval of 1857 greatly hindered rather paralyzed the educational activities in the NW Provinces." Due to the home government's prohibitive regulations that were put in place during the revolution, education spending had stopped until 1861.

Keywords: Civil Servant, Elementary Free School, Revolution, Regulation.

INTRODUCTION

AS A CIVIL SERVANT (1849-1867)

In 1849, Hume embarked on a voyage to India and upon arriving in Calcutta, he resided with his cousin James Hume. He was sent to the Bengal Civil Service the next year, serving at Etawah in the present-day state of Uttar Pradesh, which is in the North-Western Provinces. Hume held several positions while in India from 1849 to 1867, he was a district officer from 1867 to 1870, he was the head of a central department and from 1870 to 1879, he became the government's secretary. Rivers Francis Grindall's daughter Mary Anne was the woman he married in 1853.

Additionally, Hume encountered the Indian Rebellion of 1857 just nine years after arriving in India. During this period, he participated in multiple military operations, earning him the title of Companion of the Bath in 1860. Hume had to seek refuge in the Agra fort for six months when it seemed that he was safe in Etawah, which is close to Meerut, the site of the revolt. All but one Indian officer, however, stayed faithful, and Hume returned to Etawah in January 1858. He engaged in combat with the 650 obedient Indian troops he had amassed as an irregular force. With regard to the rebels who had been taken, Hume adopted a "mercy

and forbearance" policy, attributing the rebellion to British incompetence. Only seven people were put to death by hanging on his orders. It took a year to bring peace and order back to the Etawah district, something that was not achievable in most other areas.

He started putting various measures into effect shortly after 1857. As a District Officer in the Indian Civil Service, he began providing free basic education and arranged public events to raise awareness of it. He altered the division of judicial duties and the way the police force functioned. Observing a dearth of reading materials with instructional value, he and Koour Lutchman Singh founded Lokmitra (The People's Friend), a Hindi language monthly, in 1859. Its notoriety grew beyond Etawah at first. Hume was also in charge of Muhib-i-riaya, an Urdu periodical.

Hume was able to surpass his superiors through the departmental examination system that was implemented shortly after he entered the civil service and when the uprising started, he was serving as the Collector of Etawah, which is located between Kanpur and Agra. For a while, it was necessary to leave the district due to the frequent presence of rebel troops; however, Hume shown courage and sound judgment both prior to and following the evacuation of the women and children to Agra. His influence allowed him to organize a local brigade of horses and won the unwavering devotion of numerous native authorities, landowners and the populace at large.

He started scholarships for higher study after taking up the cause of education. In 1859, he claimed that education was essential to averting uprisings similar to the one that occurred in 1857.

He proposed for separate schools for young offenders in 1863 as an alternative to whipping and incarceration, which he believed would result in hardened criminals. A juvenile reformatory not far from Etawah was the result of his efforts. In Etawah, he also initiated free education and by 1857, he had founded 181 schools with 5186 pupils, two of which were girls. He contributed to the construction of a high school with a floor plan modeled like the letter "H" that is still in use today as a junior college. Some claimed that this was a sign of Hume's haughty ego. Hume referred to the concept of making money from the sale of alcohol as "The wages of sin" because he found it revolting.

His progressive views on social reform included forcing widowhood, opposing infanticide and supporting women's education. Etawah, a cleanly gridlocked business center that is now called Humeganj but is sometimes pronounced Homeganj.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ELEMENTARY FREE SCHOOL

Below is a detailed account of the events that led to the establishment of Mr. Hume's system of schools at Etawah on January 21, 1857. The following are some of the incidents that led to the foundation of the schools.

On Friday the 20th of January 1857, Mr. Hume received a semi-official permit to establish Elementary Free Schools at Etawah supported by a voluntary cess donated by land owners. After some initial resistance from Perfect Perhanda, the vast majority of landlords in the area agreed to implement the cess and he officially declared it in a well-organized public meeting and paid the first instalment of his membership to Perjuna etawah.

Later in April, 32 more important villages in Peranganh were opened. The process was sanctioned by the lieutenant governor, government of India and later by the court of directors. Encouraged by the good initial results, this system, popularly known as the 'Hulk bundi system', was gradually expanded to the entire district. By 1857, the total number of schools in Peranganh had reached 181 with 5186 students enrolled, including 2 girls.

About the school buildings, the first three structures and this "Kutch" were created for schools; the rest were made in a modest but efficient manner. They currently reside mostly in the landlord's huge flat or in a recently destroyed home that the villagers have renovated in accordance with the current style. For every school, a thick carpet that can fit both the teacher and all of the pupils has been ordered and received in addition to the cleanliness.

Country living a very capable guy was paid to many of the 181 schools teachers were found, detailed rules were printed in hindi and urdu. Where by the system was designed to guarantee the study programs, the responsibilities of the teachers and the provision of strict and continuous monitoring.

However, from the earliest days of this movement, the goal for every kind of institution served as a bridge connecting students from elementary schools to Agra College. As a seed of such an institution, Mr. Hume established a central English and local language school in Etawah at the beginning of August 1856. However, they encountered criticism as well.

HUME ESTABLISHED SCHOOLS IN ETAWAH DISTRICT (1854-1867):

In the North Western Provinces, 'Hume was assigned to the positions of collector and magistrate at Etawah in 1854. With a population of 722,000 and an area of 1,693 square miles, the Etawah District had a less prosperous economy'.¹ When Hume first arrived in Etawah, he observed that the locals were enthusiastic about the idea of opening schools. The Orientalist British commanders opposed the establishment of the schools until Hume took over as district commander. 'The residents of Etawah were incredibly uninformed and unprepared to send their children to school, according to a report written in 1852 by Henry Stuart Reid, the Visitor General of Schools'.²

Upon taking over the region, Hume summoned a public meeting that was attended by the majority of the Taluka's zamindars, or landlords. Hume suggested that there should be a high school in Etawah town and schools in each village. Hume had assistance from prominent zamindar Ajeet Singh and Tahsildar Lachman Singh of Etawah. In order to pay for these schools, Hume asked the zamindars to sign a formal agreement binding themselves and their heirs and to contribute one percent of their land tax as education Cess (tax). With the exception of one, every zamindar signed the agreement. Many paid the first installment right once, while others did so over the course of a few days. Thirty-two schools in the Taluka opened in less than two months.

"By the end of the year, 181 schools had opened and every landowner in the district, with the exception of ten, had contributed voluntarily through the education cess."³ Arithmetic, geography, Indian

history and reading and writing in Hindi or Urdu were all taught in these schools. Algebra, geometry, the fundamentals of the natural sciences, bookkeeping using the native method, weighing and surveying with plane tables were taught in select schools where the teachers were more proficient. Every one of these schools had a library with general literature and textbooks for kids who couldn't afford to buy them. "These schools were so well- liked that fathers came to watch their boys' public exams to see how they were doing."⁴

"There was a considerable rise in the enrolment of boys during the next four months and on the 1 May 1857, nine days before the outbreak of the revolt the number of boys exceeded 7,000".⁵ "Hume aimed to put within the reach of every talented lad, however poor, the attainment of a first-rate education."⁶

Every year, Hume made a personal visit to each school to assess the pupils' performance. At 1856 Hume opened the Central School at Etawah, which was attended by 104 pupils. The number of pupils climbed to 250 in 1859 despite the great uprising that took place between May 10, 1857 and October 10, 1858. English, Urdu, Hindi, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Mathematics, Surveying, Geography, History and Natural Sciences were all taught at this school. It featured a 2,000 book library. The town's residents paid a monthly subscription and the students paid a small price to Hume. The institution offered a teacher preparation course as well.

Sub- districts (Talukas)	Schools	No of enrolled	No. present
Etawah	32	803	789
Phuppoond	26	609	588
Auraiyya	32	934	785
Beylah	36	1147	1118
Beebamow	9	247	247
Lakhna	23	857	857
Rowayn	23	589	589
Total	181	5186	4973

Table 1 : Letter from Hume to Harvey, the Commissioner of Agra 25 January 1859, Mehrotra and Moulton, Selected Writings,⁷⁸

With the help of Lutchman Singh, Hume launched a monthly journal towards the end of 1859. It came out in three different languages. It was known as The People's Friend in English, Prajahit (People's Welfare) in Hindi and Muhibb-i-Riaya in Urdu. The paper published brief articles that conveyed facts about the world. The lowest-income young people in the village could afford the paper because of its low price.

Originally meant only for students and alumni of Etawah schools, subscribers from other districts quickly joined. The daily changed to a fortnightly publication by 1862 and it had the greatest circulation in the province, with 31,000 copies.

All the School Committees comprised of Indians and British officers, including Hume, were only honorary members without any veto powers. The Indian members decided the curriculum, admissions, appointment of teachers and all other aspects of school management. The people were so enthusiastic that they did not want to give a holiday on Sunday. A Muslim in Mainpuri asked Hume, why should our children remain idle a whole day every week because it happens to be a religious festival with you. Additionally, there were disagreements between Hume and the Indian members of the school committees.

An agreement was made that the kids from lower castes would attend a different school and be permitted to study Hindi, Urdu and Persian but not Arabic, English, or Sanskrit. About 25% of the Zamindars in certain villages were adamantly against their cultivators' children being able to read invoices and balance accounts, but they did not object to the schools as long as their kids went. There were relatively few of these and the public's encouragement of Hume's educational endeavors fostered such a strong sense of goodwill among the populace that it prevented all British officers and their families from dying during the 1857 uprising in the Etawah area. This uprising was centered around Etawah, and in May and June of 1857, Hume engaged in two fierce skirmishes with the rebel army. To combat the rebels, Hume organized the local populace into an army.

Hume wrote later that: "Many of my indigenous friends gained the trust of some of the sepoys (soldiers) by warming themselves into their presence. The European women and children were freely offered escorts to the Agra fort by Lutchman. Singh, Kanwar Zon Singh and Anup Singh. With chivalrous kindness and cautious caution, they completed their risky self-imposed mission. When the Gwalior Grenadiers rebelled, they could have killed us all and not damaged a hair on anyone's head, but all they said was that they could not follow orders from us. The following morning, they let us all ride peacefully out of their lines."⁷.

Hume returned to the district in October of 1858, the remaining schools reopened in July of that same year. Etawah had eighteen² schools by the time the uprising finally put an end to and the British government was firmly entrenched in January 1859. The number of students under 10 years old decreased marginally from 2,519 to 1,972 (Table 2), primarily among zamindars' offspring. There were now 2,762 children over the age of ten, up from 2,667. Hume clarified that the parents' continued fear of sending their tiny children to school stemmed from Ferozeshah, one of the rebel leaders, having swung through several parts of the district in December 1858 with a sword and fire.

Year	No of sons of cultivators	No of sons of zamindars	No of sons of officials	No of sons of artisans
1857	1,631	1,342	366	873
1859	1,932	758	283	966

Table 2: Mehrotra and Moulton, Selected Writings, 326

The fact that the Etawah School Committee raised money to repair the district's schools and gave 5,500 rupees to rebuild the Agra College that was damaged during the Mutiny is a good indicator of how well-liked Hume's educational programs were. The Etawah community also contributed a large sum of money. They gave more than 110,000 rupees between May 1856 and May 1861 to help pay school masters' salaries and build school structures. Hume also gave these schools a portion of his pay. By 1861, there were 185 more schools, housing 8,700 boys, with 282 of them attending the Central English School. Hume requested funding from the government for this school. For the high school, the community contributed 263 rupees, 5 anna and 11 pie. There were 24 students living in the school's boarding house; 10 were paying students and the remaining 14 were free. After visiting the Central School and being impressed by its progress, the Lieutenant Governor pledged 10,000 rupees to finish the building, buy equipment, and maintain the school library with 600 rupees per month. "Governor-General Canning approved the sum that Hume requested".⁸

Hume also noted that the curriculum at these schools included reading, writing, arithmetic up to compound interest and the double rules of three. However, while assessing the students' ability, questions on history, geography and cube-root in decimals were asked. Therefore, the lads were tested in subjects that were not included in their school curriculum. This demonstrates that the investigation conducted by Pollack, Reid and Kempson was driven only by the desire to undermine Hume's educational system. In response to Kempson's accusations that he had disregarded the education department, Hume also said that during the five years that I was in charge of them, neither Reid nor Kempson visited nor examined a single school. Hume said, "After three years, I had increased the number of schools to more than twenty-fold and was educating about 7000 boys." This was the last part of his argument. "When I took over the Etawah district, there were only seven schools with 300 boys."⁹

When Hume returned to Etawah in January 1863, the state of the schools had gotten worse. The Indian-majority School Committee did exist, but it had no actual authority. The government had the authority to appoint and remove teachers as it pleased. Reid had altered the entire curriculum, including the number of hours required, the cost, the vacations and the texts.

As he was leaving Etawah, he invested in a government bond to pay for upkeep and scholarships for underprivileged kids and gave his entire savings of 7,200 rupees to the Central English School. Following his exit, the government declined to convert it to a high school, which would have allowed the pupils to take the matriculation exam and enroll in Calcutta University. The remaining 185 schools were progressively closed, leaving only the Central School standing.

Despite continuing to exist as a middle (Zilla) school, the Central School promoted critical thinking among its pupils. In order to examine societal vices and the hierarchical caste structure, its students organized a public discussion in 1868 and founded the Etawah Debating Club. Former Hume Central English School student Deena Nath spoke on how women's lives are so terrible and how society as a whole is deteriorating. Deena Nath promoted social reform as a means of addressing the problems inside Hindu culture. Tara Chand, who upheld the caste system, opposed him. Deena Nath's statement to Tara Chand, "I

can give you argument, sir, but not the brain," put a stop to the dispute. During the same meeting, a few club members expressed their opposition to religious and caste distinctions and proposed that true religion is based on universal love. The Orientalists, such as Reid, detested this very facet of schooling. Originating from affluent families, the Orientalists upheld the rigid caste structure and were against a drastic overhaul of Indian culture.

Result

Hume was appointed as a secretary to the Indian government in 1870, this time in charge of the insignificant department of agriculture. But Hume took the initiative and pushed for agrarian changes from the government. Due to severe famines in southern and western India in the 1870s, he enlisted the help of William Wedderburn and Mahadev Govind Ranade to draft the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Bill of 1879. This bill protected peasant land and tools from being seized by moneylenders using the civil courts. The concept of the Agricultural Banks, which lend money to peasants at one-third of the interest rates imposed by moneylenders, was also proposed by Wedderburn and Ranade.

When Hume clashed with the ruling class by 'June 1879, his official career was all but over. Due to his insubordination, he was fired from his job in the interest of public service. In 1882, Hume formally left the service.'¹⁰

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