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Educational Philanthropy in Colonial Punjab: Dyal Singh Majithia and the Making of Modern Institutions

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Abstract

This study examines the role of educational philanthropy in colonial Punjab with particular reference to Dyal Singh Majithia and his contribution to the making of modern institutions. It explores how indigenous elites participated in educational reform and institution building, and how their philanthropic initiatives shaped the intellectual and cultural foundations of modern Punjab. The article examines Dyal Singh Majithia's contributions to journalism, education, and cultural development through initiatives such as the Tribune, the Vidyadaan plan, Dyal Singh College, Dyal Singh Library, and other educational and cultural institutions established under his patronage and legacy. Special attention is devoted to his support for cultural activities, public libraries, and female education, which reflected his broader vision of intellectual and social reform in Punjab.

By analyzing the relationship between educational philanthropy, indigenous agency, and institutional development, the article argues that Dyal Singh Majithia emerged as one of the foremost architects of educational modernity in colonial Punjab. His initiatives not only promoted modern learning and civic consciousness but also laid the foundations for enduring educational and cultural institutions in North India. The study contributes to the historiography of colonial education by emphasizing the central role of indigenous philanthropy in shaping the intellectual and institutional context of modern Punjab.

Keywords: Dyal Singh Majithia, Punjab, education, British India, colonial modernity, Dyal Singh Research & Cultural Forum, Vidyadaan Plan.

Introduction

Educational philanthropy played a transformative role in the intellectual and institutional development of colonial Punjab during the nineteenth century. The introduction of modern education under British colonial rule created new opportunities for social reform, intellectual awakening, and institutional growth. While colonial educational policies sought to promote administrative efficiency and Western learning, the expansion of education in Punjab was significantly strengthened by the active participation of indigenous elites who viewed education as a means of societal progress and cultural advancement.

In colonial Punjab, indigenous philanthropists emerged as important agents of educational modernization. Influenced by liberal thought, enlightenment ideals, and changing socio-political conditions, many reform-minded elites invested in schools, colleges, libraries, newspapers, and public institutions to promote intellectual development and public awareness. Their contributions extended beyond financial patronage

to the shaping of educational discourse, cultural activities, and civic consciousness within society. Educational philanthropy thus became an important medium through which local elites negotiated colonial modernity while preserving social relevance and indigenous aspirations.

Among the leading figures of this movement, Dyal Singh Majithia occupies a distinguished place in the educational history of Punjab. Through his support for modern education, journalism, and public institutions, he contributed significantly to the emergence of a new intellectual culture in colonial North India. His educational vision emphasized rational inquiry, secular learning, and public enlightenment, reflecting a synthesis of Western modernity and indigenous reformist ideals. Institutions associated with his legacy, including Dyal Singh College and Dyal Singh Library, became important centers of learning and cultural activity in the region. Dyal Singh followed the contemporary trends by enthusiastically advocating the English language to promote education and cultivate the minds of Indians.ⁱ

Early Influences on Dyal Singh Majithia

Dyal Singh's advocacy for modern education has deep roots and a relation to his childhood. His way of learning and the environment he received after the death of Lehna Singh, a prominent Sikh aristocrat, and his wife, Dyal was left alone as the only child of his parentsⁱⁱ. According to British rules, the lad was under the custody of the Court of Wards. As court of wards dealt with the upbringing of the heirs of *Rajas* and *jagirdars*. In this court, wards got an education under the umbrella of constitutional shelterⁱⁱⁱ. Dyal Singh, after the death of his parents, came under the Court of Wards.

The period of turmoil and wars of succession weakened the Sikh rule in India after Ranjeet Singh's death. This led the Britishers to bring Punjab under their rule and occupy the *Punjabians*. After the death of Ranjeet Singh, the royal court was divided into two schools of thought; the first one believed in sovereignty and was in favor of Sikh supremacy. The second one was for following modern trends and had secret alliances with the English. This school of thought wanted Khalsa to be in control^{iv}. This led to the secret connections of the royal court with the British. So, Dyal Singh's father, Lehna Singh, had alliances with the British Government, and as a token of his loyalty towards the Britishers, his *jagirs* were given back after the annexation of Punjab.

Now, after Lehna Singh's death, the responsibility of his son was given to the British government. Under the court of wards, Tej Singh got the responsibility of Dyal Singh's upbringing. During the royal court turmoil, Tej Singh also had an alliance with the British. Tej Singh was a born Hindu Brahman and after showing a great performance in Ranjeet Singh's court he secured the position of Commander-in-Chief in Khalsa^v. Now, Tej Ram was given the name of Tej Singh. After the dusk of Sikh rule in Punjab, Tej Singh was in the good books of the Britishers. Even Rani Jindan, the mother of Daleep Singh, the last ruler of the Sikh Empire, did not let her son entertain Tej Singh during the incarnation ceremony. When Punjab was annexed, as a token of his efforts for the British government, he was one of the few persons who got their *jagirs* back from the Britishers. He was even given the name of *Raja of Batala* for his loyal efforts towards the Britishers in the battle of Sobraon in 1846^{vi}.

Now Dyal Singh was nurtured under the shadow of an aristocrat having all his loyalties towards the Britishers. Though Tej Singh had secured the status of Commander-in-Chief yet in the Royal court he was looked down upon by the aristocrats for being a *Brahmo*. On his arrival at Tej Singh's home, Dyal Singh witnessed Brahmo practices. So, the immature mind followed several Brahmo practices unconsciously^{vii}. These practices formed Dyal Singh's pluralistic approach towards religion. In the later years, Dyal Singh's inclination towards Brahmo practices can be called an impact of this environment.

Dyal Singh was under the Court of Wards, which ensured the upbringing and educational development of the wards on Western patterns. It is considered that this sort of education gave the British a sense of satisfaction in training the minds of the Wards to promote the colonial culture in India.^{viii} So was the young ward being brought up, and on the court level, Deputy Commissioner Charles Henry Tilson Marshall observed the upbringing of this kid.^{ix} He kept on visiting the boy to see the educational development of Dyal Singh at Tej Singh's house. Dyal Singh heard every minute detail of the collapse of the Sikh Empire from Tej Singh and availed the chance to listen to those historical moments from the former Sikh Commander-in-Chief. He received a basic education of the Bible at the missionary school, he had a vast knowledge of the Bible. This diversity of religious thoughts, knowledge of the bible, and fostering under the Brahma practices shaped the mind of Dyal Singh, and his approach towards the religion was not that of a stern Sikh.

Dyal Singh belonged to the period of the mid-19th century when the educational transformation was at its peak as old ideas were being questioned. He being raised on the Brahmos basic practices was inclined to it. Dyal Singh was very impressed by Brahma leader Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Roy was a Bengali reformist who was a great exponent of monotheism and challenged the idea of idolatry.^x Though Roy died fifteen years ago from the birth of Dyal Singh yet his work had affected the latter a great deal. He believed in humanity and considered it higher than any religion. Moreover, Christian missionaries attracted his mind towards the well-being of humanity which made him trust the modern trends and modern education.

A new phase of life started in the life of Dyal Singh Majithia when he made up his mind to visit the country of the new masters of the subcontinent. He was now at a stage where he could challenge the old dogmas. Despite resistance from his family, he initiated the journey and had a longing to go through the unique experience of the modern world. There he experienced the value of one's self and religious liberty in England that overwhelmed his mind.^{xi} Furthermore, he was thrilled with liberalism in England and this stance can be proved by his actions as he left wearing a turban and shaved his beard.^{xii} With a background of missionary school education and a vast knowledge of the bible, Dyal Singh could analyze this new world and came back two years later in 1876, with a new zeal to serve humanity and educate the people of his own country. India under the British Government also was gaining benefits from the new policies of education and these policies were affecting the minds of Indians to some extent.

Advocacy for Modern Education

The 19th century was a remarkable period for the advancement of modern education. The institutions that formed in India had an essence of imperial pattern, transitional steps, and a blend of local education. Dyal Singh, being a part of this metamorphic time frame, had absorbed the modern trends in his personality and philosophy of life. He had a trailblazing approach towards the advocacy of modern education, and his initiatives at the short age of fifty manifested this disposition in the later years of his life. To realize this perspective, we need to look into the evolution process the region was going through.

Dyal Singh, as the Chairman of Lahore Indian Association, led the battle of a University in Punjab on the pattern of other three universities in India through *The Tribune*.^{xiii} After Wood's dispatch, a scrimmage between the two schools of thought broke out, i.e., Orientalists and Anglistics. *Punjabians* were inclined to their customs and roots, so planting new ideas into their minds was a challenge for the imperial masters. As geography is the main gravitational force for a nation to stay united^{xiv}, language is likewise. Dyal Singh desired Indians to be educated on the modern Western patterns to make progress in the arena of sciences and technology, and to prepare a pluralistic society. To support the idea of the English language in Punjab

and for the education of *Punjabians* through modern education was endorsed by Dyal Singh Majithia. He took the assistance of a strong tool to raise his voice. This stance was not only helpful in making the Governing machinery aware of the sentiments of the inhabitants of Punjab but also shaped the minds of the locals by launching a campaign through the articles in his first Indian newspaper, '*The Tribune*' in English. He aimed for a Higher Education institute in Punjab, claiming that it had a population of twenty million and generated a good revenue,^{xv} so an educational institute on the pattern of London University was the urgency of the region.^{xvi} The voice to support the initiative for Higher Education in Punjab was raised by a series of columns published through the *Tribune* every month for a year, since the goal was not achieved.

The columns entitled 'Education in the Punjab' and 24 other articles by the *Tribune* emphasized the demand for education in the English language and to announce English as a compulsory subject. This series of columns focused on the demand for examination in the English language to meet the needs of the people of Punjab for modern education. These focused on the usage of the vernacular, its role at the middle level, and the difficulties faced by the students at the higher levels. It praised the English language and tried to attract the attention of their Masters by calling this language a boon that would be helpful to take the people of the region out of their superstitions. Rational thinking and the development of education through establishing a university in Punjab were the main focus of these writings.^{xvii} Eventually, after a series of columns and the struggle through the platform of the Lahore Indian Association, Dyal Singh accomplished the cause of the Punjab University. As a result, for the University of the Punjab, English got selected as a mode of education.

Dyal Singh's philanthropy attracted individuals working for the holy cause of planting modern education in the minds of Indians. The sensitive souls of Dyal Singh and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan felt for the whole nation, and their joint efforts turned the dimensions of the educational structure in India. Their shared focus on contemporary learning, especially the advocacy for English as a means of direction, highlighted their dedication towards providing the Indian community with all the essential skills for advancement and absorption into contemporary dialogue.

Dyal Singh was highly regarded by Sir Syed for his dedication to promoting learning and innovative principles.^{xviii} He praised Dyal Singh's attempts to advance liberal and contemporary academia in several speeches as well as manuscripts, seeing him as a comrade in the quest to improve Indian civilization via academia. Their regard for one another cut beyond ideological lines, demonstrating a commitment to the advancement of the liberal education in the country.^{xix} In his visit to Lahore in 1874, he discussed the importance of Western education and demanded the English language for the University of Punjab.^{xx} Dyal Singh played his pivotal role to educate the general population and encourage reasoned discussion by promoting higher education in modern patterns.^{xxi} Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, in his journals, provided a forum to assist the Indian population to support societal shifts, contemporary learning, and logical thinking.^{xxii} His articles supported Dyal Singh's stance on modern education and the importance of a university in Punjab. During his visit to Lahore in 1884, Sir Syed extolled Dyal Singh for his educational services.^{xxiii}

Dyal Singh's educational philanthropy brightened the future of the people of Punjab. They got an institute that enabled them to have a critical look at society and encouraged them to gain the knowledge that was needed at that time. This institute also paved the way for future liberal institutes. So, Dyal Singh's efforts for the Punjab University and efforts to make it a progressive institute made it a unique one. This enormous

achievement enabled Dyal Singh to start a plan to multiply his liberal educational institutes, which stand as a jewel in Punjab as a beacon of liberalism. We need to dig into those historical jewels that are imparting knowledge in the region and enabling Punjabis to be a literate part of the region. These institutes came into existence under proper plans and a series of efforts by Dyal Singh and his friends.

Institution Building and Educational Philanthropy

Dyal Singh was an educational philanthropist, and nature had prescribed him this role. He believed in modern education to make Indians independent. Though his married life could not give him an heir but he did not take it to heart and aimed at strengthening the whole youth by his '*Vidyadan plan*'.^{xxiv} Word *Vidya* means knowledge; *Dan* means charity in Sanskrit.^{xxv} P.N. Kirpal's book denotes: "On an early morning of June 1895, a man of middle age dressed in eastern style with a turban on his head, entered the mansion of the Session Judge Lahore. He had a document in his hand to be attested by Colonel Charles Henry Tilson Marshall. Later, after Dyal Singh's death, Henry got to know about the content of the document."^{xxvi} The will that altered the educational perspective of the Punjab.

Dyal Singh's '*Vidyadan Plan*', which highlighted the transformational potential of learning, embodied his courageous strategy for charity. He made a calculated investment in building institutes that would be long-lasting hubs of wisdom and illumination instead of just giving money. A key component of the strategy was the creation of a trust, which was carefully detailed in his will and designated a great deal of his sizeable fortune, estimated at nearly Rs. 3 million, for the advancement of liberal learning. His will mentioned three portions to be designated for the development of Punjab through knowledge. In his will, he mentioned nine trustees to enact his will, included Lala Ruchi Ram Sahni, Assistant Professor, Government College, Lahore; Babu Shashi Bhushan Mukherjee, Professor, Government College, Lahore; Dewan Narendra Nath, District Magistrate, Montgomery; Mr. Golak Nath Chatterjee, Assistant Professor, Government College, Lahore; Lala Sunder Das Suri, Assistant Super intendent, Training College, Lahore; Babu Avinash Chandra Majumdar, of the North Western Railway Office, Lahore. These nine trustees played their pivotal role to kick off an arts college in Lahore according to the instructions of Dyal Singh.^{xxvii} After mentioning his important close family members and allocating their lot, he focused on the *Vidyadan*. The first portion contained: *the Tribune*, which would be continued by the Trust for spreading knowledge through print media and enabling Indians to know the political developments in the modern languages.

Secondly, to develop a trust for the establishment of an arts college for the people of Punjab without religious biases, and in his will, he mentioned the word non-denominational institute.^{xxviii} As F.M. Bhatti's book denotes, that one of the great challenges of the college to establish was that most of the institutes at that time were working under government rule or by the religious bodies. But he wanted to establish an educational institution without the differences of religion, cast, or creed.^{xxix}

Thirdly, to set up a Public Library in Lahore that could provide easy and accessible knowledge to the people of Punjab, especially.^{xxx} He mentioned a trust to work for the establishment of an arts college in Lahore. This charitable organization was in charge of establishing and overseeing many academic establishments, guaranteeing that his dedication to the spread of learning would endure even after his death.^{xxxi}

Dyal Singh took a comprehensive stance, acknowledging that learning needs to cut across socioeconomic and ethnic divides. His goal in promoting beneficial and modern educational settings was to help various populations feel more united and forward-thinking. His programs were not limited to any one area but rather extended throughout India, demonstrating his wide-ranging belief in the power of learning to improve society.

In addition, Dyal Singh's participation in organizations such as Punjab University, where he was an organ of the senate, demonstrated his commitment to fusing conventional schooling with European language understanding. To equip learners to traverse and bring value to a globe that was changing quickly, he supported curricular modifications that placed an emphasis on current disciplines and analytical abilities. His "Vidyadan Plan" was a calculated approach for changing society rather than just a charitable initiative. He guaranteed the success of his vision, inspiring and educating upcoming posterities by putting his objectives into practice, establishing foundations, and enthusiastically taking an interest in educational variations.^{xxxii} There are seven Dyal Singh institutes working on both sides, Pakistan and India, to educate the people of both regions by empowering them through knowledge.

The "Vidyadan Plan" was a trailblazing attempt to promote contemporary, secular learning throughout the country. He made the calculated investment in building institutions that would be long-lasting hubs regarding knowledge and illumination, except than just giving money. His careful philanthropic methods guaranteed that his dedication towards learning was going to continue long after his demise.

Though in the late 19th century, Lahore possessed a government college and a university.^{xxxiii} These institutes were working in their capacity, but Dyal Singh wanted to upgrade the educational standards by introducing an arts college to enable Indians to lead a successful, educated life. He yearned for modern education for the people of Lahore on the local level. In the very beginning, when the idea was in its raw form, he asked some of his companions to assume the principalship and work for the success of the college. During Dyal Singh's life, this could not come true. When Protap Chundra Mozumdar, while working on behalf of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj,^{xxxiv} visited Lahore with a theistic mission in 1895, Dyal Singh shared his plan for a college. He wished Mozumdar to join the institute as a principal, but Mozumdar refused to join, as for him it was difficult to stay at Lahore in the long run. As a result, the idea could not be entertained in the life of Dyal Singh to establish a college.^{xxxv} Considering the hurdles for the proper machinery for setting up a college, Dyal Singh started a school in Lahore by the name of Union Academy on 1st February 1897, which gained prominence over time.^{xxxvi} After the death of Dyal Singh Majithia, the Union Academy was named Dyal Singh School. His trustees registered college on 9 December 1900, and it took ten years to structure the college in its proper form at his residence on Nisbet Road, encompassing a college, a Library, and Ram Mohan Roy hostel.^{xxxvii}

Dyal Singh College was upgraded from an academy to a college on May 3, 1910, by Sir Louise Dane, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab.^{xxxviii} A hostel was adjacent to the college to facilitate the students coming from the far-flung areas. The basic purpose was to educate the common masses of the region by introducing an educational institution. The architectural structure of the institution featured spacious halls that promoted efficient instruction. To meet the academic requirements of employees as well as pupils, prescribed areas were probably furnished with the common classroom supplies.

Dyal Singh wished for an arts college, and this college produced multiple bright stars who worked in the field of literature, art, and languages. After its formation in 1910, the college launched a monthly magazine under the name of "Union" in 1912, which altered its name to Dyal Singh College magazine. After the partition, the magazine got the name "Bahar" and in 1970 it acquired the present name "Afshan".^{xxxix} Shams-ul-ulma Tajwar Najeebabadi and Syed Abid Ali Abid were among the prominent faculty members who were drawn to the institution and promoted scholastic achievement. Syed Abid was a well-known

writer and famous for his critiques entitled “*Usool-e-Inteqaad*”, “*Adab Ke Asloob*”, “*Shama*,” “*Yad-e-Baiza*”, “*Suhaag, Talmihaat-e-Iqbal*”, “*Tilasmaat*,” “*Main Kabhi Ghazal Na Kehta*”, “*Baresham Ood*”, and “*Inteqaad*”.^{xi} Najeebabadi has been an Urdu professor at the college, whose knowledge enabled the students to analyze the world. He published the following magazines “*Makhzan*”, “*Hamaun*”, “*Adbi Dandia*”, and “*Shahkar*”.^{xii} Ashfaq Amed, a renowned Urdu professor and writer, also served at the college for two years.^{xiii} Its graduates became well-known leaders in a variety of professions and made major contributions to the advancement of the area. The quality of education can be assessed by many successful instances at the college, such as Abdul Hameed, a student of philosophy who got a distinction at the university level.^{xliii}

Dyal Singh College in Lahore has served as a center for literary improvement, encouraging pupils’ creativity and academic development. Several groups within the educational institution, like the English, Urdu, Punjabi Cultural centers, Iqbal Society, and Dyal Singh Arts Society, organize activities like discussions, poetic chanting, conferences, and Naat contests. Magazines like the yearly periodical “*Afshan*” support academic endeavors and give students a stage to display their abilities. Such programs represent the institution’s dedication to fostering a dynamic artistic atmosphere accompanying intellectual success.^{xliv}

The Dyal Singh Trust Library in Lahore stands as a significant entity. It was founded in 1908 under the utmost wish of Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, a notable figure known for his philanthropic efforts, reformative actions, and contributions to learning during the late 19th century. The public library, situated at 25 Nisbat Road close to Lakshmi Chowk, existed in Majithia’s residence, referred to as the Exchange Building, earlier than relocating to its present site in 1928. Majithia provided the institute a significant fund of sixty thousand rupees along with an inventory of 1,000 books to aid in its founding and ongoing operations.^{xlv}

Majithia’s dedication to higher learning was manifest in his last document, which designated his fortune to set up trusts for academic initiatives, resulting in the founding of Dyal Singh College and the Dyal Singh Trust Library in Lahore.^{xlvi} The library swiftly emerged as a hub for education and discussion of ideas in pre-Partition Lahore. The stormy events of 1947 resulted in considerable obstacles. Throughout the chaos of partition, the library incurred significant damages, encompassing physical harm and the destruction of several manuscripts. The exodus of its non-Muslim trustees exacerbated their activities, resulting in a 12-year cessation. In 1964, the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) of Pakistan assumed control of its management, reinstating its operations. In 1985, authority over the library was handed over to the Education Department of the Government of Punjab, and it was given back to the ETPB in 1989. Around 108 books have been published under the library and have published many Seerat books, including “*Nabi Kareem (Peace Be Upon Him) Ke Moashi Zindagi* won the Presidential prize.^{xlvii}

Keeping in view the modern trend, the library has upgraded its system by introducing computer systems, digitalization of the books, microfilming of rare documents, and upgrading the software of the library. The library offers a variety of educational books to its readers and holds 20 sections of the books collection.^{xlviii}

Dyal Singh, being a product of the joint Punjab, still connects Lahore and Amritsar as an unbreakable bond. An existing example of this stance is the formation of the Dyal Singh Research and Cultural Forum. A monument to the lasting influence of Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, an influential charitable individual and reformist committed to learning, secularism, and artistic development in Punjab, is the Dyal Singh Research & Cultural Forum (DSRCF), founded in Lahore in 2003. The Forum, which is located on Nisbet

Road near the ancient Dyal Singh Trust Library, was established to conserve and advance the goal of advancing Punjab's unique literature, languages, and historical record, which includes primarily Indian and Pakistani stories. The goals of the forum include encouraging ethnic cooperation and cross-cultural communication as well as supporting academic research in Punjabi, Urdu, and other languages and literature.^{xlix}

The DSRCF has become a thriving center for artistic research within the auspices of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), featuring Dr. Abdul Razzaq Shahid as Director and Mr. Syed Atta Ur Rehman as Chief Patron. It hosts a wide range of activities, such as intellectual meetings, global gatherings, and displays of cultural assets. Particularly, the Forum offers conferences such as "Guru Nanak Heritage of Interfaith Understanding", to foster multicultural harmony and honors noteworthy people and occasions, including the centenaries of the births of Punjabi literary giants Giani Gurdit Singh and Inderjit Kaur Sandhu.ⁱ

In his interview, on March 9, 2025, Razzaq Shahid exclaimed that "the Forum was established on the suggestion of Ashfaq Ahmed, a renowned playwright and former professor at Dyal Singh College." He further said, "The forum possesses a Punjabi institute that has more than a hundred Punjabi books in Gurmukhi script and is dedicated to the research of the Punjabi language."ⁱⁱ

In keeping its goals, the DSRCF additionally took steps to bridge ethnic and artistic gaps by digitizing archaic Gurmukhi manuscripts and making Sikh literary works in Urdu more accessible. Its archive has been strengthened by partnerships involving foreign academics and organizations, positioning it as a crucial hub for academics exploring Punjab's diverse legacy

In post-Partition India, Dewan Anand Kumar (1894–1981), son of Raj Narendra Nath,ⁱⁱⁱ was instrumental in conserving and reviving Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia's academic heritage. After attending the University of Cambridge and coming from an elite Kashmiri Pandit family, he decided to focus his life on education and serving the nation. Despite losing his enormous lands and belongings in Lahore following the split in 1947, he persisted in his goal of restoring the organizations that Majithia had envisaged. He was the founder of the Dyal Singh Trust Society in India.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Because of his steadfast dedication, Dyal Singh College was reopened in Karnal in 1949, guaranteeing the survival of modern learning in India.^{lv}

His passion led him to Karnal and Delhi to play a pivotal role for the establishment of Dyal Singh College and Dyal Singh Public Library. Such establishments embodied Dyal Singh Majithia's principles of comprehensive as well as unbiased education while meeting the demands of a diversified community. Established in 1954 Dyal Singh Public Library has grown to become an academic hub, with a vast variety of books from various of fields.

Through his dedication, Dewan Anand ensured that Majithia's scholarly legacy flourished in India after independence. Kumar's commitment to study was shaped by his family's prioritization of literacy. He was raised in an education-valuing family influenced his dedication to scholarly endeavors. Kumar's initiative and philosophy profoundly influenced the expansion and upgrading of the educational system throughout India over a pivotal era in the nation's existence.

A lasting impact left by Sardar Dyal Singh, an innovative reformist and generous donor, is Dyal Singh College in Karnal, which was founded in 1949.^{lv} He left his fortune for the institutes designed to advance liberal and humanist education in his testament. Although the first Dyal Singh College was established in 1910 in Lahore, it became necessary to recreate comparable schools in Indian Punjab after India was divided in 1947. With the help of Dewan Anand Kumar, a well-known Dyal Singh Trust member,

an institution was re-established in Karnal, Haryana. The goal of this project was to carry on Majithia's goal of spreading morals and a good liberal learning. Presently, various undergrad and graduate programs in the artistic endeavors, sciences, and economics are available at Dyal Singh College in Karnal, which is connected to Kurukshetra University.^{lvi} The college is dedicated to upholding the admirable principles of its creator by encouraging academic zeal, liberal thought, and an independent life amongst pupils.^{lvii}

The Dyal Singh Trust Society founded the Dyal Singh Public School in Karnal, Haryana, next to Dyal Singh College. It was founded in 1983. This project was a component of the Trust's continuous efforts to advance the goals of 19th-century activists as well as humanitarian who supported social progress and liberal education.^{lviii}

The school started with having few pupils and eventually grew to one of Karnal's top schools, providing a thorough curriculum from Nursery to Class XII. This institute is affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and places a strong emphasis on ethical standards, educational performance, for overall growth of the students. Dyal Singh Public School's founding demonstrates the Trust's commitment to upholding the vision of its instigator, providing high-quality education to the children of tomorrow.^{lix}

The Dyal Singh Public Library in Delhi is a prominent establishment committed to advancing learning and the sharing of information. Founded in 1954, it was reorganized in Delhi after the split of India by Dewan Anand Kumar, perpetuating the memory of Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, a distinguished humanitarian and champion of social change. Dewan Anand Kumar was the founder of this library in Delhi to lead the educational projects of Dyal Singh Majithia. It was established in the premises of Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg and was run under Dyal Singh Trust Society.^{lx} The University holds a vast range of more than 40,000 books from different fields of art, literature, and science. The library is a subscriber to 100 magazines, which affirms the quality knowledge it is providing to continue the vision of Dyal Singh Majithia.^{lxi} Moreover, the library is extended to the facility of providing free and accessible knowledge to the learners.^{lxii}

In 19th-century British Punjab, especially in the northern areas, female literacy encountered considerable obstacles caused by deep-rooted social and cultural customs, ideological orthodoxy, and imperial regulations.^{lxiii} Before the British conquest in 1849, native methods of education were present, however, chances for women were limited. The British colonial authorities, perceiving education as a means for societal change, partnered with Christian missionaries to advance female education. Missions founded institutions for girls and implemented the zenana system of instruction, in which female instructors educated women to support the privacy of their dwellings, adhering to traditional norms of privacy.^{lxiv} Prominent individuals such as Mary Ann Cooke and John Fordyce played a crucial role in these endeavors. Notwithstanding these endeavors, advancement was sluggish, hindered by social hostility and constrained finances, which hindered popular support. By the late 19th century, the size of girls' schools went up slightly, indicating progressive changes in society's perspectives on female education. Moreover, Wood's Dispatch also focused on the education of women, and this legislation had its fruitful impacts in the long run.^{lxv} Dyal Singh Majithia was an individual with a philanthropic mind without gender discrimination. He believed in "education for all" and took practical initiatives for girls' education. He believed in secular education irrespective of gender, cast, and religion. Even the first school that he introduced by the name of Union Academy was based on co-education.^{lxvi}

The educational paradigm of the 19th century was drastically changing and new educational trends were being introduced. Dyal Singh was the product of that epoch that left a mark of change on his mind. Wood's

dispatch and the introduction of educational institutions in Bengal, Banaras, and Mumbai evolved the idea of education in the other areas of the country. Punjab also accepted this change and demanded a University in Punjab. This demand was made to make the people of Punjab independent and to progress in the field of higher education. Dyal Singh was one of the pioneers of Punjab University in Punjab and was selected as a member of the Senate Committee of the Punjab University. His tireless efforts for the English language as a medium at the Punjab University and his disapproval of Leitner's idea of an indigenous medium make him a liberal educationist of the 19th century. Moreover, his will to establish a college in Lahore and a Public Library are the most remarkable accomplishments of Dyal Singh Majithia. Even after he died, in India, several institutions are working under Dyal Singh's name in different cities like Dyal Singh School and College Karnal, Public Library Delhi.

His brought up under the missionary institutions and his theological approach enabled him to work for the noble cause of education. His educational endeavors not only continued during his life but also persisted after his death. The perpetuity of his philanthropic ventures made him a prolific personality in undivided and divided Punjab.

Conclusion

Educational philanthropy played a fundamental role in the intellectual and institutional transformation of colonial Punjab during the nineteenth century. While British colonial policies introduced modern systems of education and new intellectual currents, the expansion and social acceptance of modern education largely depended upon the participation and support of indigenous elites. Through their patronage of schools, colleges, libraries, newspapers, and cultural organizations, these reformers contributed significantly to the emergence of a modern public sphere and a new culture of learning in Punjab.

Among these indigenous philanthropists, Dyal Singh Majithia stands out as a pioneering architect of educational and cultural modernization. Influenced by liberal and enlightenment ideals, he viewed education as an instrument of intellectual emancipation, social reform, and communal harmony. His advocacy for modern and secular education reflected an attempt to reconcile Western intellectual influences with indigenous social realities. Through initiatives such as the *Tribune*, the Vidyadaan plan, Dyal Singh College, and Dyal Singh Library, he helped establish enduring institutions that promoted public awareness, rational inquiry, and cultural development.

Dyal Singh Majithia's contributions extended beyond educational patronage to the broader cultivation of civic consciousness and intellectual culture in North India. His support for libraries, cultural forums, public institutions, and female education demonstrated a progressive vision that emphasized inclusivity and social advancement. These institutions continued to influence educational and cultural life long after the colonial period and became symbols of intellectual awakening and public service.

The study concludes that educational modernization in colonial Punjab was not solely a colonial project but also a product of indigenous initiative and philanthropy. Dyal Singh Majithia's legacy illustrates how local elites actively participated in shaping modern educational institutions and negotiating colonial modernity according to regional aspirations and social needs. His educational and philanthropic vision remains an important chapter in the history of modern education and institutional development in South Asia.

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