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Making Swadeshi Managers: The Antecedents of Professional Management Education in India, 1860s–1950s¹

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The history of Indian management education is overwhelmingly focused on the period from the 1950s and 1960s onward. This article traces the hitherto underexplored history of how, from the 1860s until the 1950s, Indians thought about and implemented education and training for managers. In particular, it demonstrates how Indian nationalist politicians articulated the nation-building utility of managers and managerial training, and how business education became yoked to nationalists' broader visions of India's economic regeneration. Beginning in the early twentieth century, Indian nationalists championed commercial education, advocating its evolution out of its vocational roots into something more scientific and specialized for producing skilled indigenous managers. The precise evolution of Indian commercial education exercised long-term influences on postcolonial management programs. First, Indians established a tradition of surveying the latest pedagogical methods and institutional models from around the world and adapting them to Indian conditions. Second, Indian advocates of commercial education carved out an important role for the state, working on commercial education endeavors with British officials in the colonial era and, later on, placing management education within the ambit of centralized state planning. Management had a fundamentally political valence in India. For this reason, commercial and management education programs in India, unlike in the West, largely avoided questions about their legitimacy.

Keywords: business schools, colonialism, India, management

Introduction

In 1867, P. R. Cola, a Bombay native residing in London, published a guidebook for Indian industrial development.² The volume, *How to Develop [sic] Productive Industry in India and*

1. An earlier version of this article was presented at the International Conference on Indian Business and Economic History held at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad in 2021.

2. In this article, I have used the place names and spellings commonly employed during the colonial era and the early years of Indian independence. Thus, Mumbai remains Bombay, Kolkata remains Calcutta, Chennai remains Madras, and so forth.

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the East, contained detailed plans and insights on everything from setting up a sugar factory to the manufacture of silk. Aside from being one of the earliest manifestos for the development of Indian manufacturing, Cola's book identified three particular challenges for management and managerial training in India. First, managerial skill was sorely lacking: There was "bad management in nine mills out of ten" in the country, crippling opportunities for industrial expansion. Second, Indian manufacturing enterprises overwhelmingly relied upon foreign, usually British, technical experts and managers. "English managers or superintendents, or by whatever name they may be called, will be required, till a class of native mechanical engineers, trained up for the special work, springs up," Cola predicted. Last, in order to create this class of indigenous managers and experts, Cola identified the need for proper training. Every Indian training to be a manager, he observed, "ought to receive a good English education, and a regular training in practice as well as theory, so that he may render efficient service."³

Existing accounts of Indian management education begin in the 1950s and 1960s, often focusing on the establishment of the first two Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) in 1961.⁴ It is therefore deeply significant to find an Indian meaningfully engaging with issues of management and managerial training almost a century before. Cola was not alone. This article traces a century of Indian thinking about education for managers, hitherto largely unexplored, from the rise of the textile mill industry in the 1860s through the highpoint of Nehruvian economic planning in the mid-1950s, and makes the case for long-term influences upon the professional management programs begun after Indian independence. Long before any discussion of the IIMs, Indians were thinking about how to create swadeshi managers—highly trained Indians who could replace foreign talent and take command of big businesses and industries that could stimulate economic development.⁵ This was a process that confronted British political and economic colonialism while also anticipating independent India's developmentalist ambitions.

What explains this longstanding interest in creating skilled Indian managers? Management training and education, I argue, became closely tied to the broader project of nation building in India.⁶ In significant and meaningful ways, management training was incorporated into anti-colonial nationalism and became part of nationalists' wider program for the social and economic transformation of the country. From the late nineteenth century onward, Indians recognized the role that managers could play in responding to the pernicious economic consequences of colonialism: The destruction or hobbling of Indian industry and commerce, the dominant role of British commercial interests in India, and the steady impoverishment of

3. Cola, *How to Develop Productive Industry*, 3, 310.

4. For the history of Indian management education and training, see D'Mello, "Management Education"; Haaften, "Management Science and Nation Building"; Hill, Haynes, and Baumgartel, *Institution Building in India*; Krishnamurty, "Painting the World Crimson"; A. Kumar, "From Henley to Harvard at Hyderabad"; Masrani, Perriton, and McKinlay, "Getting Together, Living Together, Thinking Together"; Rao, *From Servants to Masters*; Srinivas, "Mimicry and Revival"; Tripathi and Jumani, *Oxford History*, chap. 12; and Tumble, "Rise of the Technological Manager."

5. *Swadeshi* is the term Indians employed from the late nineteenth century onward to describe ideas of economic self-reliance.

6. Lourens van Haaften makes a similar point about how the IIMs can be "understood as nation building projects, enmeshed with political questions on the social organisation of the country" ("Management Science and Nation Building," 337).

the country. In an era when nationalists began raising their voices about the lack of educational, economic, and administrative opportunities under British rule, management training held out the possibility of cultivating Indian business talent that could transform the Indian economy and challenge foreign commercial control. Swadeshi managers therefore had a well-defined economic *and* political role. These twin roles continued during the initial years after independence, when India launched its first experiments with professional management education. Political importance translated into something unique about Indian business education: Unlike its equivalents in the West, it was largely untroubled by questions of legitimacy.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Indians championed something called commercial education, which, I argue, became the primary conduit for the creation of modern, scientific managerial education in the country. Commercial education was a global phenomenon from the nineteenth century, something which has inspired strikingly little scholarly investigation (and practically none to date in India).⁷ Before the establishment of the first professional business schools in the United States or the *Handelshochschulen* in Germany, commercial educational constituted vocational training and, as R. Daniel Wadhvani and Christoph Viebig have recently noted, even early forms of entrepreneurship education.⁸ Curricula included topics like business law, foreign languages, accounting, political economy, commercial geography, and natural sciences coupled with market and business simulations. Worldwide, commercial education provided some of the foundations for a professedly scientific, pedagogically focused training specifically for managers—the hallmark of modern managerial education.⁹ This was certainly the case in India. From the beginning of the twentieth century, a mere two decades after the establishment of the first proper commercial school in the country, Indians consciously evolved commercial education out of its vocational roots. They deliberately pushed it in a professional direction for managerial training while surveying developments in management education around the world. Indians were keenly aware of innovations in business education taking place in Europe, the United States, and Japan and advocated the utility of scientific training employed abroad. Commercial educational institutions such as the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay drew upon international models and embraced the specific objective of producing Indian managerial

7. For commercial education and its influence on early business education in the United States, see Conn, *Nothing Succeeds like Failure*, chap. 1; and Khurana, *From Higher Aims to Hired Hands*, chaps. 2, 3. For Europe, see Gstraunthaler, “History of the Austrian Commercial Colleges”; Locke, “Business Education in Germany”; Locke, *End of the Practical Man*; Passant, “Early Emergence of European Commercial Education”; and Passant, “Issues in European Business Education.” For Japan, see Nishizawa, “Business Education in Japan.” For a global perspective, see Engwall, Kipping, and Üsdiken, *Defining Management*, chaps. 4, 7. One of the few works to give serious consideration to commercial education in India is Rao, *From Servants to Masters*.

8. Wadhvani and Viebig, “Social Imaginaries of Entrepreneurship Education.”

9. For work on a similar continuity between commercial and managerial education, in this case from Germany, see Redlich, “Academic Education for Business.” Formulating a precise definition of management education has been a contentious task. As Conn demonstrates, designing well-defined American business school curricula remained an elusive goal for much of the early twentieth century. For the purpose of this article, I have principally adopted the approach of Engwall, Kipping, and Üsdiken, who trace a historic process of the scientification and research-based orientation of management education and its decoupling from practical guidance (importantly, they demonstrate this on a global level rather than through exclusive focus on the American experience). Conn, *Nothing Succeeds like Failure*, chap. 2; Engwall, Kipping, and Üsdiken, *Defining Management*, chaps. 2, 7, 10.

talent. Through the early years of independence, Indians retained a remarkably global outlook in matters of business education, thinking about how foreign models could be adapted to Indian conditions and economic realities.

Given the political importance of managers, Indian nationalists, rather than business leaders, took the lead in advocating commercial education. It is important to note that these nationalists were not simply politically connected business leaders trying to advance their own interests.¹⁰ Rather, they were fired by far wider concerns about India's social and economic transformation, coupled with the promise of India's future political autonomy. Education and training for managers, after all, lay at the confluence of two primary concerns of Indian nationalists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: The broad promotion of education, especially of a practical or scientific type, and the imperative of India's economic development, preferably through industry. This had two major consequences. First, nationalists shaped a distinctly Indian form of management training and education, one premised on particular political challenges. During and just before the Swadeshi Movement (1903–1908), which stressed Indian enterprise along with the boycott of British goods, they emphasized technical expertise for the creation and management of new industries.¹¹ By the 1920s and 1930s, with independence looming, nationalists pushed for the Indianization of management—a specific policy of replacing British managers and supervisors with Indian ones—and advocated interdisciplinary approaches to prepare for postcolonial economic challenges.

The second consequence was the significant role that the state occupied in management education. Because nationalists were thinking about management in political terms from such an early date, this is not too surprising of an outcome in the postcolonial context, at least. However, this process began well before independence in 1947, by which time Indian leaders had established a track record of partnering with the colonial state on commercial educational matters. Especially after World War I, British authorities recognized the role of commercial education in making India more industrially self-sufficient: They incorporated Indian politicians into influential committees, such as the Indian Industrial Commission of 1916–1918, which stimulated the growth of commercial education institutions across the country. In spite of the specifically nationalist purpose of swadeshi managers, the story of how Indian business education developed is therefore not one of straightforward antagonism between nationalists and imperialists. Furthermore, as management retained its political salience in the years prior to World War II, a new generation of nationalists made plans to bring management training within the ambit of centralized state planning.

Nationalist interest in commercial education was part of a much broader critique of the type of higher education the British had imported to India. In this sense, commercial education had a political valence for nationalists similar to technical education, which included various forms of scientific and engineering training. Technical education, it must be admitted, animated far greater political enthusiasm in the colonial era: In nationalist

10. Although it is certainly true that, closer to independence, Indian businessmen sought a measure of political clout within nationalist circles, it is important to remember that they remained relatively unorganized and fragmented. The Indian National Congress, furthermore, regularly found stronger and more consistent support from small-scale traders rather than businessmen and industrialists. See Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics*.

11. The classic account of the Swadeshi Movement remains S. Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*.

circles of the late nineteenth century, Deepak Kumar has observed, it was “hailed as the panacea for all ills.”¹² Ross Bassett has demonstrated how technical education’s heady appeal continued through the twentieth century, with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) evolving as the template for India’s own plans for institution building.¹³ Although leaders across the political spectrum—ranging from the radical nationalist Bal Gangadhar Tilak to the engineer-turned-diwani M. Visvesvaraya—waxed eloquently about technical education, they nevertheless recognized that commercial education played a vital complementary role. Technological acumen, after all, was of limited utility without the business and managerial skills to make new enterprises and industries function efficiently. Long-term recognition of this complementary relationship, in turn, inspired independent India’s management education policies in which management programs fell under the ambit of bureaucracies for technical education; in which the IIMs eventually evolved in tandem with the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs); and in which, as Chinmay Tumble has argued, the technological manager became “the aspirational ideal” in modern Indian society.¹⁴

Nationalist interest, the involvement of the colonial state, and a symbiotic relationship with technical education all created a unique trajectory for business education in India. This returns us to the question of legitimacy. Business education’s evolution in India contrasts vividly with the story of the American business school. Rakesh Khurana and Steven Conn explain the American business school as a product of managers’ deliberate attempts to craft and legitimize themselves as a profession, a vehicle for prestige similar to what doctors or lawyers enjoyed. This process of legitimation nevertheless encountered significant stumbling blocks, with critiques about the role, purpose, and utility of business education dating from not long after the establishment of the first American business schools.¹⁵ In the Indian story, managers and business leaders are, for the most part, conspicuously absent. With politicians and nationalist-minded educationists enunciating the nation-building utility of business education, very few questions of legitimacy arose in India: The economic value of creating Indian managerial talent to displace European control and develop modern Indian business and industry was blatantly obvious.

In order to trace the antecedents of professional management education in India, this article primarily relies upon government reports; reports of the Indian National Congress and its affiliate, the Indian Industrial Conference; publications of chambers of commerce and educational institutions; and contemporary periodicals. The thousands of pages of evidence in the reports of the Indian Industrial Commission, in particular, give an unrivaled perspective on management thought and the state of managerial training in the early twentieth century. Whereas archival material related to commercial education and specific institutions, such as Sydenham College, can be scant, Bombay newspapers from the early twentieth century provide a thick record of the development of the commercial education movement and nationalists’ advocacy of management training.¹⁶ Using such source material, I begin this

12. Kumar, *Science and the Raj*, 141.

13. Bassett, *Technological Indian*.

14. Tumble, “Rise of the Technological Manager,” 194.

15. Conn, *Nothing Succeeds like Failure*; Khurana, *From Higher Aims to Hired Hands*.

16. Pandemic conditions prevented me from searching for material in the Maharashtra State Archives, where there would likely be relevant material.

article with nationalist interest in technical and commercial education in the late nineteenth century before focusing on the commercial education movement, primarily in Bombay, and how Sydenham College decisively pushed commercial education beyond its vocational roots. With World War I as a significant temporal break, the article then considers the expanded role of the state in managerial training and providing employment opportunities for Indian managers—the contentious process known as Indianization. After another global conflagration, partition, and independence, I finally examine how the state built on commercial educational antecedents to fashion India’s first experiments in professional management education.

Technical Education, Nationalism, and the Beginnings of Indian Commercial Education

When P. R. Cola outlined the three challenges of Indian management—a lack of managerial expertise, a reliance on foreign talent, and the need for proper training—he was addressing his fellow entrepreneurs and industrialists. Politicians, however, quickly evinced equal interest. In an era when economic issues—especially poverty and the drain of wealth—fired nationalist politics, the question of Indian managerial and technical training overlapped with broader political concerns about developing human capital in India. For this reason, many early nationalist leaders came out strongly against foreigners monopolizing positions of economic importance in India. In 1876, for example, Dadabhai Naoroji identified a “moral drain” whereby Indians were denied the ability to develop their professional skills due to the domination of Europeans in every field.¹⁷ Whereas Naoroji’s focus remained on the civil service, Mahadev Govind Ranade more closely followed in Cola’s footsteps by thinking about the challenges of management in Indian industry and commerce. Like Cola, Ranade identified a “want of skill and good management.” He fiercely critiqued European domination of Indian business, which was “transferring the monopoly not only of wealth, but what is more important, of skill, talent, and activity to others.” Lastly, he agreed with Cola that only by sufficiently training Indian managers and experts could this domination be curtailed. Indians had to “import freely Foreign Skill and Machinery, till we learn our lessons properly and need no help.”¹⁸ It is important to remember that this nationalist interest in business and management was not simply a theoretical exercise. Many early leaders, including Naoroji and his congressional colleague Dinsha Wacha, were also businesspersons and had developed significant experience establishing and managing commercial and industrial concerns.

Whereas Indian interest in modern management can be traced back to the establishment of the first managing agencies in the 1830s, it is only in the 1860s, contemporaneous with the rise of Indian-owned mill industries in Bombay and Ahmedabad, that we begin to see significant discussion about the training of Indian managers.¹⁹ Managers in late nineteenth-century India, it is true, could be quite different from the professionals of later decades: They were

17. Parekh, *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings*, 213.

18. Natesan, *Essays on Indian Economics*, 190, 197, 128.

19. For the beginnings of the managing agency system, see Kling, “Origin of the Managing Agency System in India.”

answerable to managing agency houses, performed a gamut of technical roles related to mill or factory operations, and managed employees through a variety of informal—and occasionally corrupt—methods.²⁰ Nevertheless, from an early date, Indian commentators clearly understood the central role that managers played in supervising large businesses and industries and promoting organizational efficiency. These skills, coupled with technical and engineering know-how, were recognized as being critical to the maintenance of new industries upon which Indians placed so much hope for their country's economic regeneration.

In the 1870s and 1880s, technical education became a key nationalist demand: It combined nationalist interest in practically oriented education, on the one hand, and economic modernization through industrial growth, on the other hand. In Poona, as Ross Bassett has documented, Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Mahratta* and *Kesari* newspapers championed scientific and technical education, paying particular attention to the progress of MIT.²¹ The nationalist Poona Sarvajanik Sabha formed a special educational committee, arguing that India could not industrially develop "till we have a race of men among ourselves fully trained to plan, establish, and work every department of manufacturing and trading with efficiency and cheap native skill."²² In Bombay, Naoroji struck upon the idea of memorializing Lord Ripon's reformist tenure as viceroy by endowing a technical institute in the city, which would eventually become the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute (VJTI).²³ The Congress soon took up the cause, calling for the government to implement technical education "to employ more extensively than at present the skills and talents of the people of the country," including for positions of industrial and business leadership.²⁴ Aside from the model of MIT, Indians might have been inspired by German polytechnic institutes, where, in the mid-nineteenth century, future captains of industry could avail of some commercial courses while pursuing engineering studies, a combination designed to foster entrepreneurship.²⁵

The Swadeshi Movement crystallized Indian demands for technical education and ideas about how technical education could be used for training managers. First, the movement augmented calls for Indian managers to replace foreign talent. Speaking at the Congress-aligned Indian Industrial Conference in Banaras in December 1906, Praphulla Chandra Ghosh argued that "the object of the *Swadeshi* movement will be frustrated if we are to look to England or America to give us mills and mill-managers."²⁶ R. N. Mudholkar, a congressional leader and entrepreneur from Berar, relied upon military analogies to stress the need for proper managerial training. Instead of education for laborers in "the Industrial army," Mudholkar emphasized that it was the "training of generals and captains"—that is, managers and supervisors—that would "determine victories more than the bravery and steadiness of the

20. For some vivid descriptions of management and managers in Bombay's early mills, see Rutnagar, *Bombay Industries*. See also Rao, *From Servants to Masters*, chap. 2.

21. Bassett, *Technological Indian*, chap. 1.

22. Chandra, *Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, 76.

23. Dadabhai Naoroji to Hormusjee A. Wadya, October 8, 1885, National Archives of India (hereafter NAI), Dadabhai Naoroji Papers, N-1 (401); Naoroji to Kashinath Trimbak Telang, December 24, 1885, NAI, R. P. Patwardhan Manuscripts.

24. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress*, 53.

25. Passant, "Early Emergence of European Commercial Education"; Wadhvani and Viebig, "Social Imaginaries of Entrepreneurship Education."

26. *Report of the First Indian Industrial Conference*, xxix.

rank and file of an army.”²⁷ Second, the Swadeshi Movement stimulated initiatives for technical education, both with and without government support. In Calcutta in 1904, Jogendra Chandra Ghose established the Association for the Advancement of Scientific and Industrial Education of Indians to fund training abroad for deserving candidates and to provide loans to help them start and run new industries upon returning. Two years later, Ghose submitted plans to the Bengal government to upgrade Sibpur Engineering College into an institute for technical and industrial training. Meanwhile, P. C. Ray, founder of Bengal Chemicals, became an advisor for the newly established Bengal Technical Institute.²⁸

The subsequent failure of many swadeshi initiatives, however, underscored an important fact: Technical education was not enough. By itself, it was insufficient to create a cadre of skilled Indian managers. Amidst the rubble of failed banks, industrial ventures, and businesses, many Indian leaders realized that business and commercial training were imperative, especially for imparting managerial skills. P. C. Ray became particularly scathing of Indians’ single-minded obsession with technical education (and equally scathing of one of its chief proponents, M. Visvesvaraya), arguing that it made much more sense to develop skills in business organization and raising capital.²⁹ Similarly, the economist and sociologist Radhakamal Mukerjee wrote in the *Modern Review* that “too frequently business enterprises have failed in India on account of the dissociation of business ability from expert knowledge.”³⁰ Consequently, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Indians began to vigorously demand programs of commercial education, seeing it as a necessary complement to technical and scientific skill.

What, however, constituted commercial education in India? At the outset, it was—like in Europe and the United States—vocational in scope, meant to train clerks, bookkeepers, correspondents, and stenographers. It originally sprung from a mix of public and private initiatives, with the Madras Presidency taking the lead. In 1886, Pachaiyappa’s College in Madras established India’s first proper commercial institution, Chengalroya Naicker’s Commercial School. The school’s curriculum included a mix of practical and academic topics: Bookkeeping, political economy, study of insurance, and “superior penmanship.” A talented graduate of Madras University, K. Subramani Aiyar, became the school’s headmaster. Aiyar would later be described by the *Bombay Chronicle* as “the hot-gospeller of commercial education”: His name was attached to a slew of new institutions throughout the country. In 1895, Aiyar became the principal of the new Calicut Government School of Commerce. Flagging official interest in commercial education in the Madras presidency, however, apparently caused Aiyar to resign in 1900 and move to Bombay, where he became involved in citizens’ efforts to start commercial education in the city. He was appointed the principal of the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Institution, immediately turning it into a college of commerce.³¹ That same year, Sohrab Davar, the first Indian to pass British examinations for accountancy

27. *Ibid.*, 216, 233.

28. S. Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 112, 166; *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume II*, 756–757.

29. P. C. Ray, *Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist*, 1:319.

30. Radhakamal Mukerjee, “The Relative Claims of the Factory, the Workshop and the Cottage Industry in the Economic Life of India,” *Modern Review*, June 1913, 626.

31. “Education in Commercial Subjects,” *Madras Mail*, December 23, 1885, 5; “Commercial Training at Madras,” *Indian Magazine*, December 1887, 668, 699; “K. S. Aiyer Dead,” *Bombay Chronicle*, January 3, 1940, 5.

and company secretaryship, established another commercial institution in the city, Davar's College of Commerce. By 1906, the *Times of India* counted twenty separate commercial classes in the city, all of them privately run without government support.³² These programs were overwhelmingly vocational in scope, with courses on bookkeeping and shorthand, for example. Occasionally, they prepared students for external professional examinations, such as those offered by the London Chamber of Commerce.³³

Despite these vocational origins, Indian advocates of commercial education were keenly aware of innovations that promised more scientifically oriented training for business leaders, including managers, rather than mere clerks. Although it has not been possible to track down the specific curricular changes they advocated, it is abundantly clear, from the international examples they cited, that their ambitions extended well beyond what had already been attempted in Bombay and Madras. For example, Pestonji N. Wadia, a trustee of the new Byramjee Jeejeebhoy College of Commerce, cited the model of the Antwerp Higher Institute of Commerce in Belgium to demonstrate that products of commercial education could “soar far far higher than correspondence clerks” and instead become “heads or proprietors of large business firms, managers of banks, consuls and vice consuls.”³⁴ Many Indians expressed deep interest in the model of the London School of Economics (LSE), which began “scientific” commercial education for “the captains of industry and commerce,” as well as British university commercial departments established after 1901.³⁵ One advocate of commercial education, for example, fastened on LSE's specialized education in topics such as statistics, industrial regulations, trade unions, and “the principles and practice of railway administration.” A thorough knowledge of “fundamental principles” in these areas helped to make “an efficient business man.”³⁶ At the same time, Indians were conscious of how German innovations beat a steady march over Great Britain's belated adoption of higher commercial education. Germany's commercial schools and *Handelshochschulen* evinced such Indian interest that the British-owned *Times of India* complained in 1900, with a hint of concern, of it being a “fetish.”³⁷ With increasing frequency, Indians also cast their eyes eastward: To higher commercial institutes in Japan, where graduate-level programs began in 1897.³⁸

The commercial education movement in India was sustained by a broad array of supporters: Educationists, professionals, businessmen, nationalists, and some government officials. This last category of supporters was particularly important, something that made commercial education proposals more feasible than many of those for technical education. Indian demands for technical education—including Jogendra Chandra Ghose's idea for upgrading Sibpur Engineering College and Jamsetji N. Tata's efforts to establish the Indian Institute of Science—had encountered oftentimes stiff government opposition.³⁹ Contrary to

32. “Commercial Education,” *Times of India*, September 17, 1906, 6.

33. “Parsi Education: Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Institute,” *Times of India*, March 9, 1909, 8.

34. “Commercial Education,” *Kaiser-i-Hind*, October 28, 1900, 10.

35. Dahrendorf, *LSE*, 59, 60.

36. *Report of the Eleventh Indian Industrial Conference*, 165, 164.

37. “Commercial Education,” *Times of India*, October 31, 1900, 4.

38. Nishizawa, “Business Education in Japan,” 355.

39. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume II*, 756; Sebaly, “Tatas and University Reform in India.”

the European experience, the state in India was reluctant to foster engineering education (in 1903, however, the government did institute scholarships for Indians to study technical education in Great Britain).⁴⁰ In contrast, several British government officials expressed support for commercial educational initiatives, facilitating financial assistance and recruiting foreign experts. This element of government cooperation, as we will see, helped influence how Indians envisioned a distinct role for the state in managerial training.

In 1902, Lord Curzon's Universities Commission endorsed the idea of establishing commercial faculties in Indian universities (but felt that it was "premature" to set up commerce departments similar to those in operation at the University of Birmingham or American universities, a finding that Aiyar categorized as "a surprising inconsistency").⁴¹ A few years later, the government proposed a scholarship program for Indians to study commercial subjects in Great Britain. The proposal met with universal endorsement from provincial governments despite acknowledgement that European businesses in India would be hostile to any program that would enable greater Indian competition. "In my view the interests of the Government are directly opposed in this matter to those of the European firms," remarked one British bureaucrat in a striking admission of official sympathy for Indian ambitions concerning better business training. Whereas the Bombay government pushed for scholarships specifically for "higher commercial education" for "Directors, Managers and heads of Departments," an official in the United Provinces used the proposal to instead champion "establishing a first rate Commercial College in India."⁴² Indian educationists recognized this government support and amplified calls for commercial education that could train managers and supervisors. C. Gopal Menon, former director of the commercial school at Pachaiyappa's College, argued that commercial education could be "specialised instruction" for "employers, heads of houses and departments, Agents and Travellers, and Captains of industries."⁴³

Likewise, several Indian business leaders began recognizing that commercial education had distinct utility beyond simply producing clerks: It could remedy those three main challenges of Indian management that had been earlier outlined by P. R. Cola. Businessmen complained of the acute shortage of Indian managerial talent. Furthermore, many of them found foreign managers inadequate, corrupt, or even downright incompetent. S. M. Rutnagur, editor of the *Indian Textile Journal*, surveyed European managers in Bombay's early textile mills and asserted that "some of them could hardly read or write."⁴⁴ Businessmen therefore attempted on-the-job management training, with mixed success. From the late 1880s onward, the Empress Mills in Nagpur recruited managers and department heads from Bombay University and VJTI, subjecting them to apprenticeships in order to compensate for inadequate

40. A. Earle to secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department, November 12, 1906, in NAI, Home Department, Education, Section A, 134–143.

41. *Report of the Indian Universities Commission*, 42; "Universities and Commerce," *Pioneer*, February 1, 1903, 7.

42. G. Fell, February 11, 1907; H. O. Quin to secretary to the Government of India, Home Department (Education), November 7, 1906; H. W. Orange, February 21, 1907; in NAI, Home Department, Education, Section A, 134–143.

43. C. Gopal Menon, "Commercial Education in Madras," *Indian Review*, April 1912, 307.

44. Rutnagur, *Bombay Industries*, 289.

educational training.⁴⁵ In Lahore, the Punjab National Bank relied on a similar system of apprenticeships; its secretary, however, freely admitted the acute difficulty of finding “competent men” for managerial posts.⁴⁶ On-the-job training and apprenticeships, therefore, could not produce the necessary numbers of skilled Indian managers. To drive home this point, Sohrab Davar pointed to business and industrial conglomerates in Europe and how they relied upon professional managerial training in commercial educational institutions. “It is in such concerns that the old school idea of learning business-methods by working as candidates in business offices exposes its most ridiculous hollowness,” he concluded.⁴⁷

Davar’s allusions to Europe were deliberate. He was one of the keenest Indian observers of how commercial education was developing abroad and how it was powering the economic dynamism of other countries. In an article from 1910, he celebrated the “hundreds of commercial and business schools” mushrooming across the United States and focused on how a more professionalized form of commercial education had developed at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Chicago. Davar was particularly intrigued with how the products of commercial education helped European and American business “develop into gigantic proportions”—in vivid contrast to India, where managerial “incompetence” meant that a business “in most cases dies a sudden or lingering death after its founder has passed away.”⁴⁸ Many Indians focused on comparisons between the United Kingdom and countries like the United States or Germany. Great Britain, they noted, had been painfully slow to develop commercial educational programs at its universities and had consequently suffered from relative economic decline. The British example, therefore, was a potent warning that India could ill afford to be a laggard in adopting the most innovative forms of commercial education.⁴⁹

However, the country that held the greatest appeal for Indian proponents of commercial education was Japan. Japan did not simply provide an example of rapid advancement through commercial and technical education: It also demonstrated how the state could play a leading role through establishing educational institutions. P. C. Ray specifically fastened on the Japanese model of strong state involvement when he spoke in favor of expanding Indian commercial education.⁵⁰ Indian students in Japanese commercial schools, meanwhile, occasionally wrote in Indian newspapers and magazines, encouraging their conationals to join them abroad. The pursuit of commercial education in Japan could sometimes take on strongly nationalist and anti-British overtones. “Let the government, on the one hand, proceed in its work of the wholesale massacre of our industry and commerce,” wrote one Indian student at the Imperial University in Kyoto in 1905, alluding to the drain of wealth. “Let us, on the other hand, try not only to revive our dead industries but to bring into existence new ones as well.”⁵¹

45. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume II*, 519.

46. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume V*, 22.

47. Sohrab Davar, “Commercial Education and Indian Industries,” *Indian Review*, July 1910, 520.

48. *Ibid.*, 519, 520.

49. “Commercial Education,” *Kaiser-i-Hind*, October 28, 1900, 10.

50. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume II*, 34.

51. Ambika Charan, “Commercial Education in Japan,” *Indian People*, January 26, 1905, 51.

Commercial Colleges: Beyond the Vocational

These international comparisons stimulated the movement to establish a college of commerce affiliated with Bombay University, one that would go beyond the vocational scope of many existing institutions in the city. In 1908, Dinsha Wacha delivered a lecture to the Bombay Presidency Association, “The Science of Commerce,” a title that revealingly indicated Indian receptivity to newer, professionalized approaches to business training. Bemoaning the “Egyptian darkness” in India for the study of business and economics, Wacha implored Bombay University to institute a department of commerce along the lines of those established at the universities of London, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, and Birmingham, or even Harvard University’s new graduate school of business administration. He cited Germany’s experience with commercial education, noting how the country had transformed itself from being an agricultural nation, like India, into an industrial powerhouse through rigorous commercial training that was “scientific.” By referencing these British, American, and German educational institutions, Wacha called for a university program that included both professional training for students as well as academic research, one that was grounded in “that higher scientific education which is now so well recognised in the modern universities of the West.” He cited the idea of “business economics,” developed by the British economist William James Ashley, the first professor of commerce at the University of Birmingham, which encompassed “a sustained and systematic treatment of economic questions as they present themselves to men engaged in business.” Business economics, Wacha continued, would serve a clear political purpose in India. Invoking the “spirit of Swadeshism,” he declared that Indians had a moral responsibility to take up business training. Such training would promote industrial regeneration, “diminish Indian poverty and induce prosperity,” and thereby “bring about an end of the ‘politico-economic drain.’”⁵² In Wacha’s speech, we vividly see how the goal of fostering managerial talent was yoked to broader nationalist objectives.

Wacha’s idea of setting up a commerce department at Bombay University was not entirely new—K. Subramani Aiyar submitted proposals for establishing a degree of commerce in 1905—but it did push the government toward taking concrete action.⁵³ The idea was enthusiastically taken up by a colonial official, George Clarke, once he became the governor of Bombay in 1907. Despite the governor’s dim attitudes toward nationalist politics, Indians recognized Clarke as a useful ally in matters of commercial education (Clarke’s predecessor, Lord Northcote, enjoyed a similar reputation). In early 1909, he arranged for Hastings Lees-Smith, a professor at LSE, to visit Bombay to lecture on commercial education and brainstorm ideas for establishing a faculty of commerce. Lees-Smith specifically suggested the formation of “a Commercial College after the type of the London School of Economics,” adding that the college should focus on administration—including the training of Indians for political administrative capacities—in addition to economics and business.⁵⁴ Like Wacha, Lees-Smith emphasized the importance of going well beyond vocational education to focus on

52. “Science of Commerce: Mr. Wacha’s Lecture,” *Times of India*, October 15, 1908, 8.

53. “Study of Commerce,” *Times of India*, January 29, 1912, 8.

54. “Bombay University: Study of Commerce,” *Times of India*, January 29, 1912, 8; “Higher Commercial Education,” *Times of India*, February 2, 1909, 8.

professional training and research. “The leaders of commerce and business need to be scientifically trained just as a doctor or a barrister or a professional man is,” he told attendees at the Indian Industrial Conference in Madras. Business needed something that technical education alone could not provide: “It needs not merely technical knowledge, but it needs the power of dealing with new situations, of going forward at the right moment and of controlling labour.”⁵⁵ Clarke, for his part, enthusiastically endorsed Lees-Smith’s views. Shortly after the LSE professor’s departure from Bombay, he told students of the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy College of Commerce that modern businessmen required “highly trained brains” in order to “bring scientific methods to bear upon the work of the world.”⁵⁶

Both Wacha and Aiyar played a significant role in getting Bombay University to approve a bachelor of commerce degree in 1912. The following year, Sydenham College of Commerce was established, named after Clarke (who had retired as governor and had been elevated to the peerage as Lord Sydenham of Combe) to honor his contribution to the commercial education movement. Aiyar, a pivotal figure in the college’s founding, served as the head before the government recruited a young British economist at the University of Bristol, Percy Anstey, to be its first principal.⁵⁷ Anstey came from a family with strong Bombay connections: His great-uncle, Thomas Chisholm Anstey, had been a Bombay lawyer and an MP in the British House of Commons, where he became a steadfast supporter of Indian political rights.⁵⁸ The younger Anstey—along with his wife, Vera, later a well-known economist of India at LSE—continued this progressive tradition. Pushing against stereotypes that Indians possessed inferior management skills, he set out an ambitious program for developing Sydenham into a training ground for Indian business leaders. Sydenham now became the most visible example of how commercial education in India was leading to modern, professedly scientific methods of managerial training. Its young principal was well aware of this transformation: He noted how “education in ‘commerce’ may ... mean something different,” with institutes like his turning out “not clerks, but young men fitted to rise, under suitable conditions, to positions of responsibility as managers and organizers.”⁵⁹ At the same time, Anstey agreed with nationalists like Wacha about the political urgency of commercial education. “Everything connected both with the improvement of the country’s economic organization and the levelling up of individual business capacity,” he stated in 1915, “is admittedly of national importance.”⁶⁰

The college, Anstey stated, aimed “at training a class of Indian business men capable of rising by virtue of expert knowledge, breadth of outlook, organizing capacity, and force of character to the higher and more responsible positions in enterprise of every kind.”⁶¹ He drew a clear distinction between Sydenham and other Bombay institutions that focused more on vocational training: “No course” at Sydenham, in contrast, “is vocational.” Instead, Anstey looked to some of the most cutting-edge institutions of commerce and economics

55. Quoted in Natesan, *Speeches and Writings*, 248.

56. “Byramjee J. Institute Prize Distribution,” *Times of India*, March 10, 1909, 8.

57. “Bombay College of Commerce,” *Times of India*, February 18, 1915, 3; “K. S. Aiyer Dead,” 5.

58. “The Late Mr. Anstey,” *Times of India*, November 27, 1920, 12; “Late Mr. Percy Anstey: Corporation’s Tribute,” *Times of India*, November 30, 1920, 7.

59. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume IV*, 526.

60. “The Bombay College of Commerce,” *Indian Review*, July 1915, 636.

61. Percy Anstey, “The Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics, Bombay,” *Leader*, June 20, 1915, 6.

for inspiration: The *Handelshochschulen* of Germany, Harvard Business School, and LSE. Students at Sydenham proceeded through a sophisticated array of courses that included scientific management, the psychology of advertising, industrial organization, and economic theory.⁶² In 1916, Anstey announced the creation of a statistics department, the first such department in India, with the additional aim of providing Indian businesses with useful statistical data.⁶³

Although Anstey heavily drew from educational models abroad, Sydenham was no mere foreign transplant. Instead, the college pioneered a uniquely Indian type of business education, suited for Indian business conditions and needs. The statistics department, for example, featured courses tailored to the particularities of the Indian agricultural economy, India's railway system, and its cotton trade. Anstey enunciated a higher national purpose for this department: Noting that statistics formed an "indispensable foundation of all economic and social knowledge" in a given country, he argued that "nowhere moreover is this truer than in India, where a mass of vague information urgently requires careful sifting."⁶⁴ Sydenham began India's first program for the study of the indigenous cotton industry. This included lectures by representatives of business houses such as Volkart Brothers, members of government bodies like the Indian Cotton Committee of 1919, and even trade unionists from Bombay's mills such as N. M. Joshi. Aiyar, meanwhile, established a specialized degree in accountancy at Sydenham, a particularly popular program for young Indians heading to the counting houses of Bombay.⁶⁵

Sydenham remained an undergraduate institution under Anstey but it had clear pretensions of becoming a professional school with an advanced agenda of training and research (by 1925 it had a program of "Post-Graduate research in connection with the many problems of Indian economic development, past, present and future").⁶⁶ Anstey, furthermore, believed that the college could steadily chip away at European domination of management positions in India, finally giving Indians the opportunities they desired for business leadership. At Sydenham, "a new type of highly-educated young Indian would come to the front, with incontestable claims to be tried in the superior posts that have hitherto been confined to Europeans, on the pleas that the latter alone possessed the requisite habits of thought and of work," he stated. From the standpoint of Indian management and the Indian economy at large, this was a goal of weighty significance: It sidelined any questions about the legitimacy of business education. "Certain objections," Anstey noted, "are occasionally raised here in India, as they have in the past been raised elsewhere." Anstey acknowledged common criticisms: The difficulty of teaching business skills in the classroom and an overemphasis on theory versus practice, for example. However, "the study of *Commerce* in a higher and more comprehensive sense" would give Indians a fundamental grounding in "economic organization," something that

62. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume IV*, 527, 526.

63. Percy Anstey, "The Study of Statistics," *Times of India*, June 19, 1916, 9.

64. *Annual Report of the Indian Merchants' Chamber*, 108.

65. "Early History of Cotton," *Times of India*, January 29, 1918, 9; "Trade in Indian Raw Cotton," *Times of India*, September 30, 1918, 6; "Indian Labour Problem: Lecture by Mr. Joshi," *Times of India*, August 2, 1920, 10; Mahishi, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 179, 182.

66. Mahishi, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 180.

would allow them to compete with Britons for managerial and supervisory positions. “The legitimacy of this aim will scarcely in public be contested,” he concluded.⁶⁷

Percy Anstey’s ambitions clearly captivated those Indians who envisioned a distinct role for the state in developing indigenous managerial talent. In Calcutta, for example, the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce demanded that the government establish a college like Sydenham in the city.⁶⁸ The government of Madras looked to the Bombay institution while considering the establishment of its own commercial college.⁶⁹ Sydenham’s principal also helped cultivate interest and involvement from a broad range of political figures. Dinsha Wacha was a member of its advisory board, as was at least one other Congress politician, H. A. Wadya. Perhaps the college’s most famous early political association was with B. R. Ambedkar. Returning to India after studying at Columbia University and LSE, Ambedkar had struggled to secure employment in the face of rampant caste-based discrimination and employers’ concerns about his political views. Anstey hired him for a two-year professorial position.⁷⁰ Sydenham received strong support from nationalist-oriented business associations like the Indian Merchants’ Chamber, which, in turn, urged the government to develop more advanced training: Following the Japanese model and sending commerce graduates abroad for further education “specially as managers and supervisors.”⁷¹

Anstey’s sudden death in 1920 came as a blow to Sydenham’s ambitions. Its forward-minded principal had, in any case, already complained to the government about inadequate quarters for the college, overly stringent bureaucratic control, and poor comprehension of English among members of the student body, thereby revealing the real challenges that commercial education continued to face in India.⁷² However, Sydenham played a clear role in stimulating across India both commercial education and, specifically, early forms of professional management training suited for Indian conditions. The nationalist leader Madan Mohan Malaviya, for example, included a college of commerce in his original plans for Banaras Hindu University (BHU).⁷³ In order to develop this college, K. Subramani Aiyar suggested the recruitment of Sydenham graduates, who could be sent to Great Britain for further academic training before taking up their new academic positions. At a speech he delivered in 1916, Aiyar emphasized that the scope of commercial education had advanced well beyond the production of mere clerks. He pleaded for BHU to establish as many as twenty professorships for “the scientific study of Commerce,” and an academic program that could eventually include a master’s degree in commerce. In order to “adapt the scheme to Indian and local requirements,” Aiyar proposed that students at BHU’s college of commerce could specialize in topics such as railway organization, statistics, advanced accountancy, banking, and actuarial science.⁷⁴

67. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume IV*, 526, 527.

68. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume II*, 282.

69. “Commercial College for Madras,” *Indian Review*, December 1916, 884.

70. Omvedt, *Ambedkar*, 10.

71. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume IV*, 167.

72. “Commercial Education in Bombay,” *Times of India*, December 8, 1919, 10.

73. Natesan, *Speeches and Writings*, 247–249.

74. “Commercial Education in India,” *Indian Review*, March 1916, 231; “Commercial Education in India: Mr. K. S. Aiyar’s Address,” *Times of India*, February 28, 1916, 6.

Further downstream on the Ganges, Allahabad University in 1913 endorsed the creation of a faculty of commerce with eight faculty positions. Here, H. Stanley Jevons, founder of the *Indian Journal of Economics*, made what was perhaps the earliest proposal for a formal program of modern management education in India. In an article published in 1916, Jevons argued that it was “possible to develop an applied science of Business Management of the same nature and importance as is the science of engineering.” On-the-job training was no longer feasible or desirable: Drawing on comparisons with how engineering had developed over the past century, he called for scientific study of business organization, finance, and management. A business management syllabus tailored to Indian requirements would include works on the management of labor, including Frederick W. Taylor’s *Principles of Scientific Management*, as well as books on industrial efficiency and finance. The latter topic, Jevons emphasized, was particularly important in the Indian context because of the commercial and industrial failures that followed the Swadeshi Movement.⁷⁵

Unlike Anstey, Jevons subscribed to some racial stereotypes about Indians’ management capabilities. “Racial or climatic differences,” he held, explained why people from certain parts of Great Britain were better managers; in this vein, Jevons believed that “there is still a smaller percentage in India” of men who could exercise managerial talents. Consequently, he envisioned a small and highly selective enrollment for a management institute in India, similar to the elite Thomason College of Engineering at Roorkee. Such a management institute could be supplemented by “technical business schools” in major Indian towns, which would concentrate on vocational training for forepersons and supervisors. Jevons’s plans provided yet another sign of how professional business education was evolving in India, now independent of its vocational roots.⁷⁶

The Interwar Years: Indianization and the Role of the State

Because of financial stringencies during and after World War I, the spread of commercial education in India proceeded in fits and starts. At BHU, for example, Madan Mohan Malaviya failed to establish a commercial college. This was despite notable public support for the venture and even one suggestion, made by the *Leader* of Allahabad in 1919, that Malaviya collaborate with Bombay industrialists to begin an American-style management education program.⁷⁷ At Allahabad University, stimulus for commercial or managerial education faltered after H. Stanley Jevons’s departure from the institution: Only one reader was on the roster of the commerce faculty by the late 1920s. Nevertheless, there were encouraging signs elsewhere. By 1928, eight Indian universities had established faculties of commerce (more than the number offering engineering programs), and two more dedicated colleges of commerce

75. Jevons, “Business Management,” 328, 341, 337.

76. *Ibid.*, 347, 348, 349.

77. “India and the World of Economics,” *Leader*, December 4, 1920, 7.

had been established.⁷⁸ One of them, Lahore's Hailey College of Commerce, was modeled on Sydenham College.⁷⁹

As commercial education expanded in form and scope, Indian debates and discussions about managerial training took a fundamentally new direction. World War I was a watershed moment for redefining the role of the state in the Indian economy.⁸⁰ The Indian Industrial Commission, convened by a panicked government in 1916 to study why wartime India was so ill-equipped in matters of industrial production, issued a clarion call for state support of industrialization. India's economic backwardness, particularly its inability to produce important industrial goods, now constituted "a serious national danger." Moreover, commissioners identified those longstanding Indian grouses about managers—how they were badly trained and how too many of them were foreigners—as being against the national interest. The state therefore had a responsibility for training an industrial workforce that included skilled Indian managers. This assumption of central government responsibility was a major turning point in the story of managerial education in India.⁸¹

The Indian Industrial Commission brought together individuals and experts from across the political spectrum, putting them in an official capacity in which they exerted direct influence on state policy. Aside from British bureaucrats, the commission comprised of Indian industrialists with moderate political leanings, like Fazulbhoj Currimbhoj Ebrahim and Dorabji Tata, as well as Malaviya, the lone voice of the Congress in the body. Over two years, commissioners sought out the opinions of Indian and European businessmen, chambers of commerce and industrial associations, political leaders like Bhupendranath Basu and R. N. Mudholkar, and educationists such as Percy Anstey. Both commissioners and witnesses displayed a striking unanimity on how proficient Indian managers constituted an essential ingredient in India's economic development and how "special arrangements" were necessary "to supply candidates for supervising posts."⁸²

What were these "special arrangements"? The commission, it is true, placed great emphasis on how the state could further develop technical education, thereby giving India a cadre of engineers and scientific experts that would carry out certain managerial functions. Nevertheless, commercial education conspicuously featured in the commission's final report. Here, commissioners found a pronounced divergence of opinion between Indian and European witnesses. Many European witnesses saw limited utility in establishing commercial colleges in India, although Indians frequently urged the creation of such institutions. Commissioners sided with the Indian point of view, believing that Europeans did not have "a sufficiently wide examination of the circumstances in which trade and commerce are carried on by Indians," and urged Indian universities to establish more colleges along the lines of Sydenham.⁸³

Several individuals did not feel that this recommendation went far enough. Anstey, for example, believed that the central government—not universities, which were under the authority of provincial administrations—had a responsibility to establish "one great

78. *Handbook of Indian Universities, 1928.*

79. *Indian Central Banking Enquiry Committee*, 1:485–486.

80. Roy, *Business History of India*, 126–127.

81. *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*, 47, 103–104.

82. *Ibid.*, 99.

83. *Ibid.*, 116.

institution” for higher education and research in business matters. The further establishment of “imperfectly equipped colleges in smaller places” would be “mere short-sightedness”: Resources, students, and academic talent needed to be concentrated in a single institute of national importance.⁸⁴ In a note of dissent to the commission’s report, Malaviya suggested something similar. Referring to commissioners’ suggestions to establish a centrally managed Imperial Polytechnic Institute, he argued in favor of commerce and administrative studies being included in its ambit. He cited Japanese education policy to make a further recommendation: Generous state financial support to enable each existing university to establish a commercial college.⁸⁵

In addition to helping define the role of the state in education and training, the Indian Industrial Commission provided early signs of an issue that would dominate discussion about management from the 1920s through independence and beyond: Indianization. At its core, this was the idea that the state did not only have an obligation to train Indian managers but also a responsibility to create managerial opportunities for Indians, thereby reducing the proportion of foreigners in such positions. As we have seen, many Indian nationalists had championed this cause from the late nineteenth century onward, but something was now fundamentally different. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 amplified, albeit pitifully, the voices of Indians in their own government while transferring certain responsibilities, like education and industry, to responsible provincial ministries. A sliver of power and the prospect of future reform helped spark demands for the immediate Indianization of various spheres of life, such as the civil service, railway services, and military. They emboldened Indians to take steps to reduce Europeans’ economic clout by making sure that the products of India’s commercial colleges and departments had a fair shot of landing positions of responsibility. This was an urgent matter in an era when discriminatory policies often meant that qualified Indian graduates lost out on managerial positions to less qualified Britons, who then subjected Indians to disingenuous “homilies,” as one economics professor complained, on “our want of ability, honesty and efficiency.”⁸⁶

Calls for the Indianization of management, therefore, dovetailed with deeply felt economic grievances. During the 1930s and 1940s, in particular, a crescendo of opposition built up toward the managing agency system in place in commercial and industrial ventures, which many Indians classified as a tool for perpetuating European economic control and dominance. Elsewhere, business associations like the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and the Ahmedabad Mill Owners’ Association regularly complained that European dominance of banks and particular industries significantly hobbled Indian enterprise. In its official report, the Indian Industrial Commission agreed with this standpoint, stating that overreliance on foreign managers, supervisors, and experts constituted “a serious handicap to progress and militate[d] against the ideal of an industrially self-sufficing India.”⁸⁷ Malaviya, in his note of his dissent, specifically targeted the three Indian presidency banks in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras for the glaring absence of Indians in higher positions. He urged the amalgamation of

84. *Indian Industrial Commission, Volume IV*, 528, 529.

85. *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*, 299, 279.

86. *Indian Central Banking Enquiry Committee*, 2:245.

87. *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission*, 103.

these banks into one central state bank where “adequate facilities will be provided for training Indians.”⁸⁸

This opportunity quickly materialized. Once the presidency banks were combined into the Imperial Bank of India in 1921, Dinsha Wacha, now in the capacity of a governor of the bank, strenuously pushed for Indianization and the professional training of Indian managers within the institution. This was a decisively uphill task. Although the bank adopted a training and apprenticeship scheme for recruiting Indians for higher posts, designed particularly to draw graduates from Sydenham, European managers and directors provided resistance. Such resistance incensed Indians and pushed them toward political recourse. The Indian Central Banking Committee of 1931, which had majority Indian membership, brought the state back into the picture. The committee endorsed a policy of deep Indianization at the highest echelons of the Imperial Bank, the cessation of recruitment of officers from Britain, and an expansion of commercial education at universities to supply skilled personnel for banks. Committee members criticized a lack of coordination between banks and existing commercial education programs, suggesting that more coordination would smooth the way toward greater employment of Indian commerce graduates. They also recommended the creation of scholarships so that Indians could go abroad to study the workings and management of foreign banks.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, such was the hold of European interests that extremely few Indians rose to managerial positions. In 1943, J. R. D. Tata threatened to resign as a member of the bank’s board because of the lack of progress in Indianization.⁹⁰

Although the Imperial Bank remained a bastion of European control, many private companies took cues from public sentiment about Indianization and began hiring indigenous managers. The Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), which had previously faced criticism for its large non-Indian cadre of managers and experts, took concerted steps in this direction after the establishment of the Jamshedpur Technical Institute in 1921, which churned out future experts, technicians, and managers proficient in steelmaking technology.⁹¹ Inductees included graduates of management and other professional programs abroad. In 1938, J. J. Ghandy, who had attended Columbia Business School in New York, became TISCO’s first Indian general manager, taking over the helm from a line of Americans. But qualified Indians faced noticeably more difficult prospects elsewhere. This was certainly the case in foreign-owned firms, where outside pressure for the Indianization of management was more intense, as was internal resistance. Prakash Tandon, newly returned to India as a chartered accountant and Manchester University graduate, encountered European employers’ deep hesitancy toward hiring Indian managers while interviewing for jobs in Bombay and Calcutta in the late 1930s.⁹²

European resistance to the Indianization of management triggered a variety of responses. In a spirit of conciliation, Sohrab Davar encouraged “European friends” to “throw open a certain number of important appointments to the children of this country, so that harmony and

88. *Ibid.*, 285, 286.

89. *Indian Central Banking Enquiry Committee*, 1:347, 486, 488, 480.

90. A. Ray, *Evolution of the State Bank of India*, 3:505.

91. “Indianization at the Tata’s,” *Modern Review*, September 1931, 357–358.

92. Tandon, *Punjabi Century*, 232–234.

co-operation may be cultivated.”⁹³ Others took a much harder line. B. Mukherjee, a professor of economics and sociology at Lucknow University, declared that the reluctance of British-owned banks to hire Indians for higher posts was “anti-national.”⁹⁴ Mukherjee looked toward India’s looming independence to warn of punitive measures against companies that resisted Indianization. So did Harendra Coomar Mookerjee, an educationist and member of the Congress who endorsed mandatory government regulations for the number of Indians on boards of directors and in senior positions. “A National Government if and when it comes, as come it must, if determined to liquidate alien business can easily do so while keeping strictly within the letter of the law,” he warned.⁹⁵

Planning for Management Education in Independent India

The prospect of a “National Government” and independence crystalized many facets of managerial training in India, particularly the complementary roles of technological and business education. M. Visvesvaraya, whose obsession with technical education had earlier annoyed P. C. Ray, now called upon all Indian universities to focus on just three academic functions: Technology, commerce and economics, and “Popular Lectures on Nation Building work.”⁹⁶ In his influential 1934 treatise on economic planning, he even endorsed the creation of American-style business schools in the country as part of a broader educational scheme of “polytechnization.”⁹⁷ The nationalist-minded sociologist Benoy Kumar Sarkar, meanwhile, advocated active cross-disciplinary collaboration for business instruction. “It is only when the professors of economics, statistics, finance or commercial geography get the benefit of cooperation with chemists, engineers and other industrial experts that an institution can be run which is likely to impart the most dynamic and fruitful instruction in commerce,” he believed. This “vitalizing of the general pedagogics” in commercial colleges would have clear nation-building utility, contributing to “the further development of the Indian people in modernized commerce and industry.”⁹⁸

At the same time, the Congress’s definitive lurch toward socialism—along with Gandhian ideas of trusteeship—fostered a broader vision of managerial functions, including labor relations and the operation of large state bureaucracies. Academics combined disciplines like sociology, social work, and economics to study labor relations and labor welfare at a slate of new institutions, including the Tata School of Social Work, the Bombay School of Economics and Sociology, and, two years after independence, the Xavier Labour Relations Institute in

93. Sohrab Davar, “Business Education India Needs,” *Times of India*, March 29, 1938, 8.

94. *Indian Central Banking Enquiry Committee*, 2:247.

95. H. C. Mookerjee, “Management and Control of British Industries in India—III,” *Calcutta Review*, December 1944, 59, 63.

96. “Where the Indian University Education Is Inadequate: Technical Subjects Neglected,” *Times of India*, November 12, 1930, 11.

97. Visvesvaraya, *Planned Economy for India*, 251–252.

98. B. K. Sarkar, *Economic Development: Snapshots*, 358, 359.

Jamshedpur.⁹⁹ In 1942, the University of Calcutta organized a degree program in labor welfare for supervisors in the jute industry, which later matured into the All-India Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management (AIISWBM).¹⁰⁰ Through these institutions, Indian academics experimented with forms of management training geared toward the particularities of the Indian economy and visions of how industrial relations would be transformed after independence.

The University of Calcutta's degree program in labor welfare provides a good example of how Indian management education evolved in relation to specific economic conditions. The program worked closely with the Indian Jute Mills Association to design "in-service training" particularly meant for supervisors already employed in the city's jute mills. Once the program had achieved a degree of success, it expanded its intake to managers and supervisors from other prominent sectors of Bengal's economy: Cotton mills, engineering firms, railways, tea plantations, and mining.¹⁰¹ In 1947, the University of Calcutta dispatched the program's director, D. K. Sanyal, to Britain to study developments in personnel management and make course recommendations attuned to Indian conditions. Sanyal delivered a mixed verdict on management in the metropole: Visiting industrial sites, he was taken aback by poor industrial working conditions and labor supervision ("In fact my own opinion is that so far as the Cotton and Jute Industries are concerned working conditions in our country are better than in Lancashire and Dundee"). From conversations with British professors, he recommended implementing courses on statistical methods, social and industrial psychology, and—keeping in mind the Congress's commitment to labor welfare—labor law and public health administration. Sanyal further recommended that the government of India work with the International Labour Organization to make a thorough study into "the functions, training and employment of Personnel Managers."¹⁰² All of this was a far cry from the resource-starved, vocation-oriented commercial education begun in Madras and Bombay only a few decades earlier.

Initiative in management education, however, remained in the halls of political power rather than in any university cloister. In its proceedings before World War II, the National Planning Committee, established by the Congress in 1938, explored the fusion of commercial and technical education. It considered the idea, first proposed by Madan Mohan Malaviya two decades before, of a single Central Polytechnical Institute that would offer instruction and training in a mix of industrial, technological, and commercial disciplines.¹⁰³ Ambalal Sarabhai, the Congress-aligned industrialist from Ahmedabad, additionally suggested an institute dedicated to the study of industrial psychology, once again demonstrating the cross-disciplinary ethos of the era. Both Sarabhai and Jawaharlal Nehru, the chairperson of the planning committee, were pragmatic enough to realize that institution building by the central government would be a drawn-out process, especially as another global conflagration threatened to realign national priorities. For the time being, they made a number of recommendations, including state directives to businesses and industries to provide advanced commercial

99. Raianu, *Tata*, 96–99; Kaufman, *Global Evolution of Industrial Relations*, 497, 499; *Silver Jubilee Souvenir*.

100. *Triennial Report of the Director, 1953–1956*, 1, 2–3.

101. *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta*, 210, 211–212.

102. Sanyal, *Personnel Management and Social Work*, 2, 38, 39, 41.

103. *National Planning Committee*, 35.

training to Indians.¹⁰⁴ The planning committee held out the possibility of punitive action and even “propaganda against” foreign-owned companies that did not provide such services.¹⁰⁵

World War II, followed by the acute political uncertainty leading up to the partition of India and independence, put planners’ work into a deep freeze until 1948. The following year, the University Education Commission, headed by S. Radhakrishnan, made landmark interventions into business education, which ultimately influenced independent India’s policies on future management institutions. The Radhakrishnan Report, as the commission’s findings were known, recognized a fundamental difference between commercial and management education. This was a deeply significant observation, representing a break with how education for business had developed in India since the 1880s. Commissioners surveyed the status of commercial education in India and found a significant mismatch with current national priorities. Although “almost every Indian university” now had a commerce department, and several offered master’s degrees in the subject, the objectives of commerce programs were ill-defined. Were these programs producing future managers “proficient in the general principles of business organization,” or were they churning out specialists in fields like accounting or banking? Indian businesspersons, they continued, found commerce graduates badly equipped to handle the realities of commercial and industrial organizations.¹⁰⁶

In the final judgment of the Radhakrishnan Report, commercial education was “pre-professional,” something that made students “conversant with the general lines of many kinds of business.” However, it was not enough to prepare the managers that independent India now needed. To explain the difference with management education, the report made an analogy with, quite naturally, engineering:

As in engineering the technician deals chiefly with empirical skills, while the professional works not only with skills but with natural laws, organized knowledge, and the application of general principles; so in business there is a difference of kind between commerce courses and the profession of business.¹⁰⁷

The state therefore gave tacit endorsement to the idea that management could be a profession.¹⁰⁸ It was a profession, furthermore, which had clear utility for a government envisioning a large expansion of the public sector and a sweeping redefinition of the relationship between capital and labor. Consequently, the Radhakrishnan Report recognized management education’s utility for labor union management, bureaucratic efficiency, and the organization of educational institutions. It clubbed schemes for management education with those for public administration and industrial relations, reflecting both the socialist promise of the early Nehruvian years and the interdisciplinary spirit carried over from before the war.¹⁰⁹

104. *National Planning Committee No. 2*, 44, 45, 46, 17.

105. *National Planning Committee*, 45.

106. *Report of the University Education Commission*, 1:206, 207.

107. *Ibid.*, 1:208, 277.

108. This represents a contrast with contentious debates over recognizing business as a profession in the United States. Khurana, *From Higher Aims to Hired Hands*.

109. *Report of the University Education Commission*, 1:279–286.

The Radhakrishnan Report left an indelible stamp on Indian management education in one other way: Its international outlook. Whereas earlier generations of educationists and politicians had looked as far afield as Japan and Germany for inspiration in commercial education, only two viable models for management or administrative training remained after World War II: That of the United States and of Great Britain. The Radhakrishnan Report took a pronouncedly American turn. It chalked up U.S. economic productivity to the belief that business management could be a profession in which practitioners could receive advanced training like doctors or engineers. Furthermore, commissioners believed that independent India had much to learn from recent American experience: The rapid buildup of proficient, democratically responsible bureaucracies and public enterprises.¹¹⁰ In this sense, it is important to recognize that India's subsequent management education policies were not simply blind adoption of American modes. Indian officials gravitated to the American model because they saw its distinct utility for meeting postcolonial India's unique economic and political challenges.

Commissioners dispatched detailed questionnaires to professors and deans in schools of business and public administration across the United States, peppering them with questions on what distinguished American and British management models and which model would be best suited for India. Not surprisingly, many of them urged the implementation of the former (commissioners did not contact British academics). Wallace S. Sayre, a professor at the Cornell School of Business and Public Administration, cautioned that the British model could be "aristocratic" and believed that India's democratic commitments could benefit from American "managerial 'know how.'" "If I understand Mr. Nehru's aspirations correctly and if I understand the direction in which India is moving, I believe that the importations into India of our public administration concepts should be carefully selected from among our newer democratic ideas," he stated.¹¹¹

After the Radhakrishnan Report, decades of debate and unfulfilled plans for business training gave way to concrete action. Amidst the veritable alphabet soup of new government bodies that sprung up after independence, management education now came firmly within the ambit of centralized state planning. In 1950, the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)—a group of bureaucrats, politicians, educationists, and industrialists aligning India's educational priorities with its new economic needs—put J. J. Ghandy of TISCO in charge of a special subcommittee for implementing management education in eastern India. Ghandy and his colleagues embraced interdisciplinary approaches, which would become the hallmark of what made Indian management education unique from the 1950s onward. Members endorsed management instruction for all Indian undergraduates studying engineering and technology, part-time and refresher courses in management in select universities, a graduate program in management affiliated with the new IIT under construction at Kharagpur (a detailed prospectus included courses in ethics and sociology, industrial history, psychology, and labor and trade unions), and administrative staff colleges to bring together Indian business and government leaders.¹¹² This was part of a larger project that, as a Ministry of Education publication

110. *Ibid.*, 1:276, 280.

111. *Ibid.*, 1:658, 657.

112. *All-India Council for Technical Education*, 59–60, 93–108, 72.

later put it, strove to “find a place for liberal education in technical studies” because trained experts needed “a wider understanding of how the economy of a country works.”¹¹³ The aim of planners was the rapid production of managers with a broad educational outlook for handling independent India’s manifold complexities.

This largely set the tone for policies in the early 1950s. In its First Five Year Plan, the Planning Commission reflected on decades of Indian thought on the complementary nature of business and technology when it declared that “it is not enough to have only scientists and technologists but also scientists and technologists who can administer and organise large scale production and distribution.”¹¹⁴

The actual groundwork for management programs began in 1953. That year, the AICTE established a special Board of Management Studies that initiated “National Diploma” programs in business management, industrial engineering, and industrial administration. Seven institutions piloted the scheme: AIISWBM in Calcutta (which inaugurated India’s first professional management program in 1954), the Delhi School of Economics, the Bombay School of Economics and Sociology, IIT Kharagpur, the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, and VJTI in Bombay.¹¹⁵ Amidst this institution building, board members borrowed and adapted from both the American and British models. On the one hand, they suggested the adoption of Harvard’s case method in management courses and compared syllabi of management programs at Columbia and Ohio State universities.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, they relied upon visiting experts from Britain, such as Bernard Mouat-Jones, who in 1945 had served on the United Kingdom’s Percy Committee on Higher Technological Education. This led to some creative outcomes. Ghandy, a product of American managerial education, led a committee that established the Administrative Staff College in Hyderabad, patterned on the British institute of the same name in Henley (the Tatas had also adopted Henley as a model for the training of their own managers).¹¹⁷ Although embracing Henley’s “syndicate method” of self-instruction within small groups, the Staff College steadily integrated Harvard-style case studies into its pedagogy, producing and utilizing a case collection drawn from Indian industry.¹¹⁸

Postwar American leadership in management studies obviously had special appeal to Indian officials. In early 1955, Humayun Kabir, minister of scientific research and cultural affairs, began corresponding with the Ford Foundation’s India representative, Douglas Ensminger, about American support for a dedicated “institute of management studies.”¹¹⁹ Over the next several years, Indians and Americans undertook prolonged conversations, international visits, and planning before establishing the first two IIMs in 1961. A detailed analysis of the foundation of these IIMs is not within the purview of this article. In concluding our narrative, however, it should be noted that although the IIMs represented a major departure in Indian management education, their founding embodied several important

113. Chandiramani, *Technological Education in India*, 18.

114. *First Five Year Plan*, 556.

115. *Triennial Report of the Director, 1953–1956*, 9; “Management Studies: Grant for Calcutta Institution,” *Times of India*, August 11, 1954, 5; Chandiramani, *Technological Education in India*, 14–15.

116. *All-India Council for Technical Education*, 65, 82.

117. Masrani, Perriton, and McKinlay, “Getting Together, Living Together, Thinking Together.”

118. A. Kumar, “From Henley to Harvard at Hyderabad,” 383.

119. Hill, Haynes, and Baumgartel, *Institution Building in India*, 15.

continuities with commercial educational antecedents. First, and most obviously, was the centrality of the state and how their perceived nation-building utility gave these institutions legitimacy. The IIMs were conceptualized to meet the postcolonial state's overriding need—"the planned, rapid transformation of Indian society"—through the production of experts and supervisors, which Nehru had emphasized in the Second Five Year Plan.¹²⁰ Rather than being exclusively linked to particular business groups, the IIMs, as Lourens van Haften has recently noted, were "nation building projects, enmeshed with political questions on the social organisation of the country."¹²¹ Second, the IIMs paid attention to interdisciplinarity—initially, at least. The UCLA academic George Robbins, whose 1959 report became the template for IIMs, strongly advocated creating a student body drawn from a wide variety of academic disciplines, a principle that IIM Ahmedabad's faculty endorsed while selecting its first incoming cohort in 1964.¹²² Last, and perhaps most significantly, cooperation with the Ford Foundation and American universities was entirely in keeping with Indians' capacious global outlook in matters of business education and training. This cooperation was a fitting culmination to decades of engagement with foreign academics; study of foreign institutions, pedagogies, and methods; and the steady adaptation of ideas and disciplines to meet Indian requirements.

Conclusion: The State and the Professions

In April 1968, just over a hundred years after P. R. Cola first identified the challenges of management and managerial training in India, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi strode into the new campus of IIM Ahmedabad. With Louis Kahn's red brick buildings as a striking backdrop, Gandhi delivered a convocation address for the institute's third batch of graduates. Elements of her address harkened back to familiar themes in the historical development of Indian managerial talent. The prime minister underscored the need for better efficiency in factories and workplaces. She warned about overreliance on foreign expertise: "We cannot do without importing know-how and technology, specially in the comparatively new industries, but dependence on collaboration is bad, for it diverts us from our own effort." "Indian skills"—with nods to "self-reliance" and Mohandas K. Gandhi's promotion of swadeshi ideals—were to be the order of the day. This brought Gandhi to her final point: The special training managers needed to harness both technological know-how and business acumen. These were all themes that bore striking similarity to ideas articulated by nationalist-minded educationists in the

120. George Robbins, "Recommendations for an All-India Institute of Management," 1959, in the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad Archives (hereafter IIMA Archives), https://archives.ima.ac.in/public/documents/1959_Recommendations_for_an_All_India_Institute_of_Management.pdf, 1; Myers, "Management in India," 153.

121. Haften, "Management Science and Nation Building," 337.

122. Robbins, "Recommendations for an All-India Institute of Management," 2, 13; Tumble, "Rise of the Technological Manager," 188.

interwar years, champions of *swadeshi* in the early twentieth century, or, indeed, early advocates of industrialization like P. R. Cola a century before.¹²³

This article has demonstrated other continuities in the realm of management training and business education: How the role of the state was determined by nationalists and their cooperation with some colonial officials and how Indians were willing to borrow and adapt models from across the world. Why are these continuities important? I offer four principal reasons.

First, these continuities challenge conventional narratives of the development of professional management education in India, crossing the temporal divide of 1947 (or, indeed, 1961, when the IIMs were established) to demonstrate how colonial-era developments set the tenor for management education plans and institution building in the 1950s and 1960s. Antecedents such as Sydenham College—or the findings of the Indian Industrial Commission—indicate how Indians consciously labored to make commercial education a vehicle for the type of scientifically oriented managerial training necessary to promote industrialization and claw back the dominance of foreign managers. In India, modern management education resulted from steady evolution rather than a decisive rupture with past practice. By acknowledging this process of evolution, we can better appreciate how particular long-term influences—nationalist ideals, the roles of certain politicians and bureaucrats, and the symbiotic relationship between technical and commercial education—left a unique imprint upon the form and purpose of education for Indian managers. We can observe how the political importance of management education was not simply a Nehruvian phenomenon. Rather, management education in India has *always* elicited political interest and influence.

Second, the Indian experience provides a much-needed account of how commercial and early managerial education evolved outside of Europe, the United States, or Japan—in an impoverished country under colonial rule. From the very beginning of the twentieth century, as this article has shown, India was fertile ground for new educational ideas and innovations. Indians were not passive recipients of models imposed upon them by their British colonial masters: Indeed, they were well aware of the shortcomings of British commercial education. An Indian perspective, furthermore, shines light on a very different path toward the creation of the professional business school. Unlike in the United States, where managers attempted crafting themselves into a profession to seek legitimacy, Indian political figures mostly called the shots. They enunciated the nation-building utility of business education in ways that overcame questions about its legitimacy. As this article has demonstrated, the long history of Indian business education is shot through with a sense of political urgency: *Swadeshi*-era enthusiasm for building up and running resilient Indian industrial enterprises or, in the interwar years, the imperative of Indianization to finally displace foreign economic control. Business education was thus yoked to the central economic grievances of Indian nationalism and, like technical education, became a tool for national transformation. It is with little surprise, therefore, that the Indian government pursued management education schemes with gusto in the years after independence, arguing that they were of critical national importance

123. “Prime Minister’s Address to the Third Annual Convocation of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad,” Press Information Bureau, Government of India, April 13, 1968, in the IIMA Archives, <https://archives.iima.ac.in/public/convocation/speech/chiefguest/1968.pdf>.

for its developmentalist ambitions. Articulated as a necessity for nation building, rather than just a means for the professionalization of managers, Indian management education remained relatively buffered from those doubts, criticisms, and questions of legitimacy voiced in other countries. The Indian story thus makes a strong case for further study of the long-term evolution of management education in other postcolonial societies that adopted developmentalist, state-centered agendas. We might encounter similar examples in which business education was untroubled by questions of legitimacy.

Third, exploring the antecedents of professional management education provides a new perspective on the evolution of the relationship between private business and the Indian state. As Indra Gandhi's 1968 convocation speech at IIM Ahmedabad indicated, management continued to be an important political issue after independence. State power and influence remained dominant factors. Although it is true that other models of state-led business and commercial training exist around the world—the development of commercial schools in Meiji Japan or the role of German bureaucrats in establishing the *Handelshochschulen*—the Indian experience was qualitatively distinct in terms of the sheer initiative that politicians and the state took instead of the business community. During the first years of independence, as Dwijendra Tripathi and Jyoti Jumani have noted, most Indian businessmen outright dismissed the value of management education or expressed indifference to the government's attempts to begin management programs (big business groups like the Tatas, which provided experts for government bodies on management education, were the exception that proved the rule).¹²⁴ In vivid contrast to the United States, where business leaders played a critical role in the establishment and funding of business schools, in India the state had to beg, cajole, and occasionally pressure the business community for support. For example, in 1952, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, the chairperson of the AICTE, threatened that the state could raise funds for new educational initiatives via a tax on industrial production in case private philanthropy was lacking.¹²⁵

Last, the evolution of management education in India reveals the tight relationship that existed between nationalists, the state, and the professions in general. (Whether management was truly a “profession” is not a debate in which I wish to enter; it is nevertheless significant that, in the Indian context, it was regularly invoked alongside law, medicine, and engineering in official and nonofficial circles.) During the period that this article has covered, management was not alone in exciting political intervention. Whether it was law, the civil services, medical services, or engineering cadres for railways and public works, the colonial state had a strong monopoly on the most prestigious and high-paying professional positions—as well as the educational institutions and examination systems that functioned as professional gatekeepers. The Congress, once it was founded, naturally took an interest in these professions and how qualified Indians were being systematically shut out of them. Law and legal reform were areas of obvious interest to early members of Congress: Most of them were lawyers, well-attuned to the disadvantage their race played in securing judgeships and the racial dynamics in court judgments. Aside from the continued clamor for technical education, the engineering profession absorbed the Congress's attention through debates

124. Myers, “Management in India,” 148; and Tripathi and Jumani, *Oxford History*, 209.

125. *Proceedings of the Seventh Meeting of the All-India Council for Technical Education*, 22–23.

on topics ranging from indigenous industrial support to railway nationalization. Finally, the medical profession had featured in the Congress's agenda since 1893, when the party began demanding reform of the Indian Medical Service. Supporters of Congress populated the leadership of the Indian Medical Association, founded in 1928, while the Congress's National Planning Committee made interventions into public health matters.¹²⁶ These are only a few examples of how a nexus between politics and the professions evolved concurrently with the development of commercial and management education outlined in this article. In general, we can observe how nationalists fashioned professionals into important pillars of a swadeshi ethos.

What explains this strong and longstanding political involvement in the professions? Other than providing avenues for meaningful Indian employment, nationalist-minded politicians recognized the critical roles these professionals could play in transforming Indian society after independence. Nasir Tyabji has spoken of the Nehruvian state's interest in the "social engineering" of industrialists for state-led development.¹²⁷ This is a useful frame for examining a bigger dynamic: One in which the state was involved in social engineering projects for postcolonial India's economy, society, and political culture. Here, managers were recognized as key agents of change. In 1952, Harendra Coomar Mookerjee—the leader of Congress who had earlier warned European firms of liquidation if they failed to comply with Indianization—addressed a meeting of the AICTE. Now governor of West Bengal, Mookerjee spoke of the need to create actual "social engineers" in India: Men and women who would "instil confidence in the people, promote cooperative attitudes and win the enthusiastic participation of the common man in our new ideas." Without such social engineers—managers, scientists, or educationists—the postcolonial project of wholesale reform "will be in danger of a slow failure."¹²⁸

This, in conclusion, was the enduring political appeal of managers and managerial training: The potential for wide-ranging transformation, the ultimate end goal of swadeshi ambitions nurtured from the late nineteenth century onward. An earlier generation of nationalists had recognized the role of commercial education in Germany's and Japan's industrial transformations; after independence, Indian bureaucrats had surveyed American management education to plan for rapid development in a democratic context. Managers in training embodied the hopes of Indian leaders to implement sweeping change, relying on cutting-edge pedagogies and methodologies from abroad that were adapted to a swadeshi context at home. The swadeshi manager, thus, emerged with roots both at home and in the world, a fitting symbol of the modernity aspired to by Indian nationalists and the country's postcolonial leadership.

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126. Jeffery, "Doctors and Congress"; Kiran Kumbhar, "The Cure," *Fifty Two*, April 30, 2021, <https://fiftytwo.in/story/the-cure/>.

127. Tyabji, *Forging Capitalism in Nehru's India*, xv.

128. *Proceedings of the Seventh Meeting of the All-India Council for Technical Education*, 13.

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