

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

# Known Knowns

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India currently has a population of 1.38 billion people. It's the most populous democracy in the world, the US a distant second. As such, India is home to more schools (1.5 million), students (250 million), and teachers (9.7 million), as well as more post-secondary faculty (1.5 million) and institutions (55,000) than just about anywhere in the world. The sheer numbers are staggering, and the historical research possibilities appear endless.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these figures, *History of Education Quarterly* has published exactly one research article on India since the journal's founding. That sole article, "An Examination of Some Forces Affecting English Educational Policies in India: 1780–1850," appeared more than fifty years ago. Its lead author, Nancy L. Adams, was a graduate student in comparative education at the time, and her study focused on how the East India Company approached education in India through its charters. From Adams's research, we learn of the political, religious, and commercial forces that pressed the company to "do something for the natives." The pressure at first resulted in commitments to protect missionaries involved with religious education from potential violent attack. Later, the company's charter evolved to introduce commitments to not only "moral improvement" but also "useful knowledge." Adams's history takes readers up to the start of official English education policy in India with the rise of formal funding and appropriation structures. Although a promising start, this represents the only known publication from the author on Indian education.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Department of School Education & Literacy, MHRD, Government of India, *Catalysing Transformational Change in School Education: Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2017–2018 States and UTs*, December 2018, <https://www.unicef.org/india/reports/catalysing-transformational-change-school-education>; Padma M. Sarangapani et al., *No Teacher, No Class: State of the Education Report for India 2021* (New Delhi: UNESCO, 2021), 28; Government of India, Ministry of Education Department of Higher Education, *All India Survey on Higher Education 2019–20*, iii, [https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/aishe\\_eng.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/aishe_eng.pdf); Deloitte/Confederation of Indian Industry, *Annual Status of Higher Education (ASHE), 2021: In States and Union Territories of India*, October 2021, p. 24, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/in/Documents/public-sector/in-ps-ASHE-Report2021-noexp.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>Nancy L. Adams with Denis M. Adams, "An Examination of Some Forces Affecting English Educational Policies in India: 1780–1850," *History of Education Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1971), 157–73. The quotes are on pages 160, 162, and 163, respectively. *HEQ* has published a handful of other articles that touch on India, but do not take the country as their central focus. See, for instance, the following: Mark E. Balmforth, "A Nation of Ink and Paint: Map Drawing and Geographic Pedagogy in the American Ceylon Mission," *History of Education Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (November 2019), 468–500; David

The lack of research on India in *HEQ* has left our readers with a substantial blind spot. Historians interested in the topic have turned to other sources like *Paedagogica Historica*, *History of Education* (UK), and the *History of Education Review*. But even there, scholars find slim pickings. Each of these journals has published less—in some cases far less—than two dozen histories squarely about Indian education. *Paedagogica Historica* has focused on Indian revolts against British rule, women's schooling and identity, intellectual transfer and exchange, language and writing education, and caste, class, and colonialism. *History of Education* (UK) has highlighted Indian education and missionary work, the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations, formal and non-formal education, and the politics of war and colonial empire-building. And *History of Education Review* has directed its attention to Indian education and social service culture, knowledge exchanges, and femininity and morality.<sup>3</sup>

Articles published by these three journals on Indian education provide a foundation for further historical research. But they represent a small fraction of their overall back catalogues. *Paedagogica Historica*, *History of Education* (UK), and *History of Education Review* have each been in operation for decades. Collectively, *HEQ* and these three peer journals have printed more than two hundred volumes, thousands of articles, and hundreds of thousands of pages of historical research. Between them, a mere forty articles have focused on India. Arguably, we have much more to learn from this significant share of the world's students, educators, and administrators about their experience with constancy and change.<sup>4</sup>

No journal, of course, can serve all fields and subfields equally well. Specialization has its merits. For researchers wanting to learn about history of education in the world's second largest democracy, *HEQ* has been *the* indispensable journal. Since

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S. Busch, "Service Learning: The Peace Corps, American Higher Education, and the Limits of Modernist Ideas of Development and Citizenship," *History of Education Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (November 2018), 475–505; U. D. I. Sirisena, "Educational Legislation and Educational Development: Compulsory Education in Ceylon," *History of Education Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (Fall 1967), 329–48; Alan Peshkin, "The Shaping of Secondary Education in Pakistan," *History of Education Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (March 1963), 4–18.

<sup>3</sup>For a sampling, see the following works: Parimala V. Rao, "Modern Education and the Revolt of 1857 in India," *Paedagogica Historica* 52, no. 1 (2016), 25–42; Tim Allender, "Learning Abroad: The Colonial Educational Experiment in India, 1813–1919," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 6 (2009), 727–41; Ulrike Stark, "Letters Beautiful and Harmful: Print, Education, and the Issue of Script in Colonial North India," *Paedagogica Historica* 55, no. 6 (2019), 829–53; Sutapa Dutta, "Colonial Textbooks and National Consciousness in British India," *History of Education* (2022), 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2022.2050304>; Taylor C. Sherman, "Education in Early Postcolonial India: Expansion, Experimentation and Planned Self-Help," *History of Education* 47, no. 4 (2018), 504–20; Preeti, "Agriculture as Knowledge: Delegitimising 'Informal' Knowledge through Colonial Pedagogy in Bihar, 1880–1930," *History of Education* (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2021.1998651>; Georgina Brewis, "Education for Service: Social Service and Higher Education in India and Britain, 1905–1919," *History of Education Review* 42, no. 2 (2013), 119–36; Subhasri Ghosh, "Learning Femininity in Colonial India, 1820–1932," *History of Education Review* 46, no. 1 (2017), 108–11; Amit Sarwal and David Lowe, "'Behind the White Curtain': Indian Students and Researchers in Australia, 1901–1950," *History of Education Review* 50, no. 2 (2021), 212–25.

<sup>4</sup>*History of Education Quarterly* (62 volumes), *Paedagogica Historica* (58 volumes), *History of Education* (UK) (51 volumes), and *History of Education Review* (51 volumes) have collectively published 222 volumes to date.

its first volume, *HEQ* has helped define the contours, questions, and debates at the heart of understanding education history in the US and, to a lesser extent, abroad. It has created a space for thinking through some of the thorniest problems for generations of historians interested in formal and non-formal education. And it has provided a platform for making substantive and methodological advances to the field.

At the same time, what about India? If demography, globalization, and climate science tell us anything, it's that India merits far more attention, generally, than it has received to date. For those of us with the privilege to study and learn about the past, India should occupy a prominent place in our "urgent but understudied" folders. While most of us will never have the opportunity to travel to India or sift through its archives, we have much to gain from those who can and do. At the very least, developing a historical perspective on India elevates our understanding of what it means to think globally about equity and inclusion.<sup>5</sup>

With this special issue, *HEQ* turns its attention to the Asia-Pacific region. Parimala V. Rao kicks things off with a provocative reflection on "Miseducation in India." *HEQ*'s editorial team is delighted to introduce readers to Dr. Rao, one the journal's newest editorial board members, who uses her essay to examine the factors contributing to "ignorance" about India's educational past.

As if responding to Rao's timely call for more research, two feature articles in this issue focus on India, and specifically on India's engagement with ideas from abroad. In "Montessori Education in India," Mira Debs skillfully tells a story of knowledge exchange and transfer, tracing the means by which the seeds of what was originally an Italian approach to educating young people took root in new soil. Similarly, Mimi Hanaoka's "Syed Ross Masood and Japan" explores the way that an Indian official—Hyderabad's director of public instruction—made sense of what he learned on a fact-finding journey that took him four thousand miles from home. Following Masood's travels, we can see how the ideas of mass education and modernity transcended borders in the early twentieth century, reminding us of the J. Robert Oppenheimer quip that "the best way to send information is to wrap it up in a person."<sup>6</sup> Each of these works helps us better understand India by way of the people and ideas that coursed across its territory, often from different parts of the globe.

Two other articles in this issue pick up on the theme of international connectedness in the broader Asia-Pacific region. In "Missionary Foebelians," Yukiyo Nishida tracks the evolution of imported ideas about curriculum and instruction, specifically looking at how an American missionary in Japan, Annie L. Howe, framed European theory. Howe's sustained efforts at interpreting German educational values for Japanese audiences spanned four decades, offering insight into the social and cultural reception of ideas. And in "The Mainstreaming of Italian," authors John Hajek, Renata Aliani, and Yvette Slaughter chart the introduction of Italian language classes as a means of cultural preservation in Australia. Despite having a relatively small

<sup>5</sup>Amanda Macht Jantzer and Kyhl Lyndgaard, eds., *Inclusion in Higher Education: Research Initiatives on Campus* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021); Rachele Winkle-Wagner and Angela M. Locks, *Diversity and Inclusion on Campus: Supporting Racially and Ethnically Underrepresented Students* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

<sup>6</sup>"The Eternal Apprentice," *Time*, November 8, 1948, p. 81.

Italian immigrant population, Australia has the world's largest number of students studying the language. How did that come to pass? And what does it mean? In answering those questions, the authors touch on many of the same themes found elsewhere in the issue.

The articles in this special issue on the Asia-Pacific region offer a formidable contribution to research—one that chips away at known unknowns in our field. Taken together, they also stand as a welcome invitation. The contributors invite us on a journey across a massive triangle, with India, Japan, and Australia at its vertices. They invite us to recast our understanding of education history by focusing on a region with an outsized portion of the world's population. And they invite us to reimagine ourselves as members of the global education community with a shared past and an interconnected future.