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Learning to Labour: "Native" Orphans in Colonial India, 1840s–1920s*

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Abstract: To this day, the history of indigenous orphans in colonial India remains surprisingly understudied. Unlike the orphans of Britain or European and Eurasian orphans in the colony, who have been widely documented, Indian orphans are largely absent in the existing historiography. This article argues that a study of "native" orphans in India helps us transcend the binary of state power and poor children that has hitherto structured the limited extant research on child "rescue" in colonial India. The essay further argues that by shifting the gaze away from the state, we can vividly see how non-state actors juxtaposed labour and education. I assert that the deployment of child labour by these actors, in their endeavour to educate and make orphans self-sufficient, did not always follow the profitable trajectory of the state-led formal labour regime (seen in the Indian indenture system or early nineteenth-century prison labour). It was often couched in terms of charity and philanthropy and exhibited a convergence of moral and economic concerns.

INTRODUCTION

Works on institutions in the colonial Indian context, as elsewhere, have mostly symbolized state power. Whether it be institutions of adult incarceration or

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child reform, they have generally stressed the centrality of institutions in understanding the rise of modern state power.[1] Contrary to this dominant line of Foucauldian thinking, this article deploys a bottom-up approach and argues that there are limitations to applying the Foucauldian model in the colonial context. The essay highlights the role that non-state actors played in building institutions of childcare. In doing so, it strives to highlight the multidimensionality of the civilizing mission in a colonial context – incorporating not only the colonial civilizing mission, but also the Christian and self-civilizing missions of indigenous actors. The article further argues that by shifting the gaze away from the state, we can vividly see how non-state actors juxtaposed labour and education. I assert that the deployment of child labour by these actors, in their endeavour to educate orphans and make them self-sufficient, did not always follow the profitable trajectory of the state-led formal labour regime (seen in the Indian indenture system or early nineteenth-century prison labour). It was often couched in terms of charity and philanthropy and exhibited a convergence of moral and economic concerns.

A mixture of mostly vernacular and skill-based training along with religious instruction/indoctrination remained a constant feature of the education imparted in the orphanages for "native"[2] orphans from the1840s until the late 1920s. This article asserts that, while religious and caste community formation remained the underlying reasons for the proliferation in the number of orphanages in colonial India, industrial training in the orphanages served

1. The list is too huge to be produced here in its entirety. To mention a few: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1995); Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (New York, 1979); David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (New York, 2002); for the Indian context, see Satadru Sen, *Colonial Childhoods: The Juvenile Periphery of India, 1850–1945* (London, 2005); Clare Anderson, "The Andaman Islands Penal Colony: Race, Class, Criminality, and the British Empire", *International Review of Social History*, 63:SI26 (2018), pp. 25–43; James H. Mills, *Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism* (London, 2000); Sanjay Nigam, "Disciplining and Policing the 'Criminals by Birth', Part 1: The Making of a Colonial Stereotype – The Criminal Tribes and Castes of North India", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 27 (1990), pp. 131–164; *idem*, "Disciplining and Policing the 'Criminals by Birth', Part 2: The Development of a Disciplinary System, 1871–1900", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 27 (1990), pp. 257–287. Notable exceptions to this body of work are Sara Hodges, "'Looting the Lock Hospital in Colonial Madras During the Famine Years of the 1870s", *Social History of Medicine*, 18 (2005), pp. 379–398, 379; Andrew J. Major, "State and Criminal Tribes in Colonial Punjab: Surveillance, Control and Reclamation of the Dangerous Classes", *Modern Asian Studies*, 33 (1999), pp. 657–688, 659; Jessica Hinchy, "Deviant Domesticities and Sexualised Childhoods: Prostitutes, Eunuchs and the Limits of the State Child "Rescue" Mission in India", in Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific* (Canberra, 2014), pp. 247–279, 249–250. Hinchy, in her study of child "rescue" missions in colonial India from "deviant domesticities" of eunuchs and prostitutes, highlights the limitation and ambiguity of the colonial child "rescue" projects.

2. I have used the words "native", indigenous, and Indian interchangeably to avoid repetition.

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several purposes. It was thought to promote self-help and rehabilitation, inculcate discipline, and instil a sense for dignity of labour, provide access to cheap labour,[3] ensure social control,[4] and serve to make the orphan homes self-sufficient.

Even though industrial training for orphans remained a constant element in the colony from the 1840s until the late 1920s,[5] in Britain, military/naval training (mostly drill and band) remained an important and constant feature of Victorian child-welfare programmes throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[6] Similarly, the training imparted to European and mixed-race orphans in the colony was principally geared towards military

3. By cheap labour I mean labour that could be extracted in return for food, housing, and clothing.
4. American sociologist E.A. Ross first used the word social control in 1901. There is now an extensive list of literature on the role of education as a tool of social control, rather than an equalizing and liberating force. See Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York, 2001); Richard J. Altenbaugh, "'Our Children are Being Treated Like Dogs and Ponies:' Schooling, Social Control, and the Working Class", *History of Education Quarterly*, 21 (1981), pp. 213–222; Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in the Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (Chicago, IL, 2011); Pierre Bourdieu *et al.*, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (New Delhi, 2014); Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *The Contested Terrain: Perspective on Education in India* (London, 1998), pp. 6–14. For a list of work emphasizing the limitations of social control theory, see Paul E. Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (Farnham [etc.], 2011), p. 175; Henry A. Giroux, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling* (Philadelphia, PA, 1984); Linda Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (New York, 1988), p. 296.
5. Vocational training in the orphanages for "native" children received considerable impetus in the late nineteenth century due to the state's encouragement of skill-based training over purely literary education. For a detailed discussion on shifts in colonial education policy leading up to the popularity of industrial/vocational/technical education in the subcontinent, see Bidisha Dhar, "The Lucknow Industrial School c.1892–1918: A Case Study of Technical Education for the Artisan", *Global South*, 4 (2008), pp. 8–16, 8–10; Sarda Balagopalan, "Constructing Indigenous Childhoods: Colonialism, Vocational Education and the Working Child", *Childhood*, 9 (2002), pp. 19–34, 26–31; Arun Kumar, "Skilling and Its Histories: Labour Market, Technical Knowledge and the Making of Skilled Workers in Colonial India, 1880–1910", *Journal of South Asian Development*, 13 (2018), pp. 1–23, 3–9; Aparna Basu, "Indian Primary Education, 1900–1920", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 8 (1971), pp. 284–297, 284–286; *idem*, "Technical Education in India, 1900–1920", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 4 (1967), pp. 361–374, 361; Poromesh Acharya, "Bengali 'Bhadralok' and Educational Development in 19th Century Bengal", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 30 (1995), pp. 670–673; Sumanta Banerjee, "Educating the Labouring Poor in 19th-Century Bengal: Two Experiments", in Bhattacharya, *The Contested Terrain*, pp. 171–199; for a rich discussion on the historiography of education in colonial India, see Catriona Ellis, "Education for All: Reassessing the Historiography of Education in Colonial India", *History Compass*, 7 (2009), pp. 363–375; for a detailed discussion on indigenous education in India, see Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *A History of Education in India During the British Period* (Bombay, 1951), ch. 1.
6. Lydia Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans: Poor Families, Child Welfare, and Contested Citizenship in London* (New Brunswick, NJ [etc.], 2006), pp. 121–129.

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and empire building.[7] The failure to see indigenous orphans as subjects of the Empire or the colonial state is glaringly evident in the kind of training imparted to this social group in colonial India. This lack can be explained by the limited participation of the colonial state on the issue of "native" orphans. Contrary to the Poor Law orphans or the European and mixed-race orphans, who were chiefly taken care of by the joint venture of public and private institutions, "native" orphans mostly remained a preserve of the non-state actors.

This article is divided into three sections. The first section historically contextualizes, defines, and historiographically locates the orphan. The second section explores the colonial administrations' reluctance to become enmeshed in the issue of indigenous orphans, and the third section examines the industrial training imparted in orphanages run by non-state actors, and the varied purposes it came to serve. The available historical sources on indigenous orphans are scattered. Therefore, it would be difficult to conclusively argue for the entire subcontinent. This article mostly uses sources from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh (NWPO).[8] However, scattered pieces of evidence in other provinces and princely states point towards a trend that, if not deeply entrenched, was still present and deserves mention.

DEFINING AND HISTORICALLY CONTEXTUALIZING THE "NATIVE" ORPHAN

An early nineteenth-century *Bombay Times* article on the eligibility criteria of orphans to be indentured foregrounded that the word orphan "is to be understood as applicable rather to a child of tender years or in very early youth, than to a young person approaching within a few years the age of 16 or 18".[9] It also asserted that, "although the word describes a child who has lost its mother, or its father, or both parents, yet orphancy alone unaccompanied by actual or prospective destitution, occasioned by the death or abandonment of relations, will be no sufficient ground for indenture".[10] In the same way, in 1871,

7. Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge [etc.], 2006), pp. 228–237; *idem*, "Making and Un-making Loyal Subjects: Pensioning Widows and Educating Orphans in Early Colonial India", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31 (2003), pp. 1–28, 18–22; David Arnold, "European Orphans and Vagrants in India in the Nineteenth Century", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 7 (1979), pp. 104–127, 111–115; Satoshi Mizutani, *The Meaning of White: Race, Class, and the 'Domiciled Community' in British India*, 1858–1930 (Oxford, 2011), pp. 160–175.

8. From 1836–1858, the region was called the North-Western Provinces [hereafter, NWP]. It was renamed North-Western Provinces and Oudh [hereafter, NWPO] in 1858, which was changed to United Provinces of Agra and Oudh in 1902 [hereafter, United Provinces]. The region roughly corresponds to present-day Uttar Pradesh.

9. *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, 3 April 1839, p. 210.

10. *Ibid.*

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W. Salter Price, Superintendent of the Sharanpur Orphanage and the missionary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Sharanpur, Nasik, wrote that the term "orphans" included those who were orphans in the fullest sense of the word; that is, they had no parents or any near relatives interested in their welfare or support. However, he contended that the term "orphan" also included those categories of children whose parents were alive and, either due to poverty or superstitious religious belief, left their children with Christian missionaries.[11]

Likewise, the rules for the guidance of the Dayanand Orphanage, Lucknow stated that the term "orphan" should include children who have no one to look after them or, if they do, they are unable to do so or refuse to do it.[12] Similarly, in the official correspondence, absence of parents was not a mandatory criterion to be deemed an orphan. Most of the orphans kept under the custody of the magistrate were assumed to have parents, who were, however, unable to take care of them due to destitution or poverty. In all the above instances, destitution, poverty, and helplessness emerge as the defining factors for the condition of orphanhood rather than the actual absence of parents. By the late nineteenth century, the absence of parents, either through circumstances of poverty or death, had become a globally accepted definition of an orphan.[13]

To date, scholarly works on orphans in the Indian context have concentrated on Europeans and Eurasians. These works can be broadly divided into two temporal phases: late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century military orphanages (for European and mixed-race orphans) and the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century civil orphanages (established mostly for mixed-race orphans).[14] Scholarly works on European and Eurasian orphans have overwhelmingly emphasized the racial and class exclusivity of

11. *Ibid*. Superstitious religious belief being the sacrifice of children. Price argues that parental affection led many parents not to kill their children but to leave them with missionaries.

12. Acquisition of land for the Dayanand Orphanage at Nazirabad in the Lucknow district. Rules for the Guidance of Shrimad Dayanand Orphanage, September 1921, Uttar Pradesh State Archive, Lucknow [hereafter, UPSA], Scarcity Department, Building, and Roads, file no. 11.

13. For a definition of orphan in the context of Britain, see Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, pp. 1– 2; Laura Peters, *Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture, and Empire* (Manchester [etc.], 2000), pp. 1–2; for the Ottoman context, see Nazan Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Syracuse, NY [etc.], 2014), *passim*; For the Egyptian context, see Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Stanford, CA [etc.], 2014), p. xiii; for the North American context, see Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge [etc.], 1999), p. 8.

14. For works on military and civil orphanages, see Arnold, "European Orphans and Vagrants"; Ghosh, *Sex and the Family*; *idem*, "Making and Un-making Loyal Subjects"; Indrani Chatterjee, "Colouring Subalternity: Slaves, Concubines, and Social Orphans in Early Colonial India", in Gautam Bhadra, Gyan Prakash, and Susie J. Tharu (eds), *Subaltern Studies X: Writing on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi, 1999), pp. 49–97, 85–94; Mizutani, *The Meaning of White*; Teresa Hubel, "In Search of the British Indian in British India: White Orphans, Kipling's *Kim*, and Class in Colonial India", *Modern Asian Studies*, 38 (2004), pp. 227–251.

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the Company state and later the Raj, which crucially affected the treatment of these orphans in the subcontinent.[15]

In an attempt to transcend this narrow focus, this essay will examine "native" orphans and the anxiety and opportunity their presence generated amongst non-state actors; more significantly, indigenous actors from the second half of the nineteenth century to early-twentieth-century colonial India. To this day, the history of indigenous orphans and orphanages in colonial India remains surprisingly understudied. Unlike the orphans of Britain, who have been widely documented, Indian orphans have been largely absent in the existing historiography.[16] Satadru Sen's article and, to some extent, Karen Vallgårda's work remain the only scholarly works that directly touch upon the issue of indigenous orphans in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century India.[17] Sen's article examines Indian, Andamanese, African, and white orphans in colonial India in the second half of the nineteenth century. He avers that "the same post-1857 state that hesitated to legislate on the 'private' domain nevertheless took on overtly paternal functions, identifying and gradually occupying various theatres of child-control and parent-displacement: initially the classroom, but eventually an archipelago of orphanages".[18] While this was true in the case of Andamanese, African, and white orphans, I argue that, in the case of Indian orphans, the post-1857 colonial administration remained true to its trademark characteristic of hesitance and, at best, limited participation. It engaged with the issue of "native" orphans in a very restricted manner and generally in times of major crisis like famine, drought, or plague.

15. In the aftermath of the revolt of 1857, the East India Company [hereafter, EIC] was formally dissolved and rule over India was transferred to the British Crown.
16. For a discussion on British orphans, see Peters, *Orphan Texts*; Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*.
17. Satadru Sen, "The Orphaned Colony: Orphanage, Child and Authority in British India", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 44 (2007) pp. 463–88, p. 464. To some extent, Karen Vallgårda's pivotal work, *Imperial Childhoods and Christian Mission: Education and Emotions in South India and Denmark* (London [etc.], 2015), touches upon issues of child removal or "orphaning" of native children. Her study focuses on examining the interaction between Danish Christian missionaries, Indian children, and their parents in South India. This contributed to the creation of a universalized and sentimentalized notion of childhood, which was a by-product of transnational interactions rather than being geographically located in modern Europe or North America. This essay, on the other hand, will focus on the interactions between "native" orphans, Christian missionaries, the colonial administration, and indigenous actors like the Arya Samaj and various individual petitioners, maintaining that children were important not only to the colonial or Christian civilizing projects, but were equally significant to the indigenous self-civilizing and anti-colonial projects. Vallgårda, *Imperial Childhoods*, pp. 1–15. See also the recently published book by Jessica Hinchy, *Governing Gender and Sexuality in Colonial India: The Hijra, c.1850–1900* (Cambridge [etc.], 2019), ch. 9. The chapter has some interesting discussions on Indian orphans. However, its primary focus remains state policies, anxieties, and limitations around the removal of children from *hijra* households in the NWP.
18. Sen, "The Orphaned Colony", pp. 463–488, 464.

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Here, it is imperative to underline the significance of famine years in moulding the category of "native" orphans. Famines in India produced thousands of orphans. Most of the orphanages that housed indigenous orphans were established as an upshot of famines that ravaged the subcontinent in the nineteenth century. Secundra Orphanage in Agra, NWP,[19] run by the CMS, was one of the prominent orphanages in north India for indigenous children and was established in the wake of the Agra Famine of 1837. Likewise, most of the Arya Samaj[20] orphanages were also established as a result of famines. Famines in India brought about lasting historical changes and shaped the discourse on the nature of colonial governmentality, particularly regarding overpopulation,[21] the poor and poverty, and the nature of "welfarism" and charity in India.[22]

From its inception, the colonial state was reluctant to assume any responsibility for the survival (let alone the physical well-being) of its subject population. Therefore, in times of famine, it relied heavily on voluntary religious and philanthropic organizations and groups to mitigate the devastation. After the Bengal famine of 1770, the Company administration asserted that Indian society already possessed structures that "were admirably adapted for common effort against a common misfortune".[23] This attitude, however, underwent a significant change by the early nineteenth century – indigenous charity was now characterized as "unorganized" and "indiscriminate". The looming fear was that indiscriminate charity or relief without work would create an unproductive, lazy population dependent on the state.[24] Despite its critique of indigenous charity, the state never made any concerted, systematic effort to deal with the issue of poverty or famine in the colony. Unlike in Britain, where state-run

19. Secundra was renamed Sikandra on 25 February 1908.

20. Arya Samaj is a Hindu reform movement that promotes values and practices based on the belief in the infallible authority of the Vedas. The Samaj was founded by Dayananda Saraswati on 7 April 1875. For a detailed discussion on Arya Samaj, see Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century Punjab* (New Delhi, 1976).

21. The diffusion of Malthusian theory in the administration of famines in India has been widely discussed. S. Ambirajan, "Malthusian Population Theory and Indian Famine Policy in the Nineteenth-Century", *Population Studies: A Journal of Demography* 30 (1976), pp. 5–14.

22. For a rich discussion on famine policies, see Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London [etc.], 2001), pp. 311–340; David Hall-Matthews, "Historical Roots of Famine Relief Paradigms: Ideas on Dependency and Free Trade in India in the 1870s", *Disasters*, 20 (1996), pp. 216–230, 216–221; Sanjay Sharma, *Famine Philanthropy and the Colonial State* (New Delhi, 2001), pp. 135–192; David Arnold, *Famine: Social Crisis and Historical Change* (Oxford [etc.], 1988), pp. 104–117.

23. David Arnold, "Vagrant India: Famine Poverty and Welfare under Colonial Rule", in A.L. Beier and Paul Ocobock (eds), *Cast Out: Vagrancy and Homelessness in Global and Historical Perspective* (Athens, OH, 2008), pp. 117–139, 119.

24. This change in attitude must be seen in the context of the broader shift in colonial political rationality: the move towards liberal politics based on a "*systematic redefinition and transformation of the terrain on which the life of the colonized was lived*" (emphasis original). David Scott, "Colonial Governmentality", *Social Text*, 43 (1995), pp. 191–220, 205.

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Poor Law institutions along with private charities took care of children in need,[25] in India, the colonial administration never implemented a full-scale poor law or workhouse system. It was argued that Indians were too numerous to receive systematic relief and were beyond the workhouse system.[26]

Thus, the enormity of famine, the indictment of indigenous modes of charity, the characterization of Indian people by some sections of the colonial administration and the Christian missionaries as being incapable of taking care of its needy population, and the administration's reluctance to take charge of its subject population, led the indigenous non-state actors to take on the responsibility of self-civilizing.[27] It is in the broader context of indigenous attempts at self-civilizing that discussions around "native" orphans become prominent. Evidently, the central players in the discussions around these children are the non-state actors. The following section will first establish the limited role of the colonial administration on the issue of indigenous orphans, before dwelling on the role of non-state actors.

INDIGENOUS ORPHANS AND THE RELUCTANT ADMINISTRATION

In most of the subcontinent, there were no state-run orphanages for indigenous children in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-centuries.[28]

25. Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, p. 4.
26. David Arnold, "Vagrant India", p. 122.
27. For a more detailed discussion on the indigenous self-civilizing mission and the rise of associational culture, see Carey A. Watt, *Serving the Nation: Cultures of Service, Association, and Citizenship in Colonial India* (Oxford [etc.], 2005); *idem*, "Philanthropy and Civilizing Missions in India c.1820–1960: States, NGOs and Development", in Carey A. Watt and Michael Mann (eds), *Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: From Improvement to Development* (London [etc.], 2011), pp. 271–316, 280; Georgina Brewis, "'Fill Full the Mouth of Famine': Voluntary Action in Famine Relief in India, 1896–1901", *Modern Asian Studies*, 44 (2010), pp. 887–918, 888; Douglas E. Haynes, "From Tribute to Philanthropy: the Politics of Gift Giving in Western Indian City", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 46 (1987), pp. 339–360; David L. White, "From Crisis to Community Definition: The Dynamics of Eighteenth-Century Parsi Philanthropy", *Modern Asian Studies*, 25 (1991), pp. 303–320; Harald Fischer-Tiné and Michael Mann, *Colonialism As Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India* (London, 2004); Prashant Kidambi, "From 'Social Reform' to 'Social Service': Indian Civic Activism and the Civilizing Mission in Colonial Bombay c.1900–20", in Watt and Mann, *Civilizing Missions*, pp. 217–239, 217; Sumanta Banerjee, "Educating the Laboring Poor", p. 171; Kenneth Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1989), III.1, p. 184. For an excellent recent study on charity and philanthropy in South Asia, see Filippo Osella, "Charity and Philanthropy in South Asia: An Introduction", *Modern Asian Studies*, 52:SI1 (2018), pp. 4–34.
28. For contexts where state orphanages were established cf. Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children*, ch. 3; Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, p. 8; for a case study similar to colonial India, see Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal*.

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However, in times of famine, the administration did set up temporary orphanages in some provinces of the peninsula.[29] In 1915, it was estimated that there were approximately 25,774 orphans and 446 orphanages in colonial India, none of which were directly managed by the colonial state.[30] In 1926, another orphanage survey, carried out in the United Provinces at the behest of Jagdish Prasad Sahib, stated that there were twenty-eight Christian, twenty-eight Hindu, and eighteen Muslim orphanages in the province, none directly governed and mostly not funded by the colonial administration.[31] These surveys, though rich in information and data, give us a very partial picture of the actual number of orphans in the subcontinent primarily for two reasons. First, the surveys were restricted to the major provinces of the Indian subcontinent and did not cover the entire length and breadth of the peninsula. Second, there were many orphans who were not housed in the formal institutions that had sprung up by the 1920s.[32]

29. For instance, the NWP administration set up temporary state orphanages for famine orphans until the end of the famine. After which the official policy was first to look for any relatives willing to take custody of the children; if not, then to hand over the orphans to respectable people belonging to the same caste and creed. Failing the above two, it was stated that the orphans should be made over to established private orphanages. Administration of Relief by Missionaries in the Agra District, August 1897, UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 177, serial no. 1–3.
30. The survey was restricted to the major provinces of India, including Madras, Bombay, Bengal, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, Punjab, Assam, Burma, and Central Provinces. Two lists of orphanages were compiled in 1914 and 1915. There is a slight difference in the total number of orphans and orphanages recorded in these two lists. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that the official numbers of orphans and orphanages in early twentieth-century colonial India were close to those provided above. The lists also included Eurasian orphans and orphanages. List of orphanages in India, April 1915, National Archives of India [henceforth, NAI], Home, Judicial, A, nos 376–384. See also the Statement showing the orphanages managed by various denominations and religious bodies in India, October 1914, NAI, Home, Judicial, A, nos 298–311.
31. Council Questions, 7 January 1926, UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 30, serial no. 52.
32. There were again two reasons for not housing orphans in formal orphanages. The first was the continuation of the pre-colonial tradition of keeping orphans in places of religious worship or in residences of "charitably" disposed private individuals (mostly as house-help). Official reports and surveys frequently mentioned that many orphans were taken care of informally in places like Arya Samaj *Mandir* (temple). The second reason was the deliberate hiding of orphans from public view in institutions that were not called orphanages. The Christian missionaries did this by renaming orphanages as schools and boarding hostels (since religious identity of orphans had become a source of contestation between the Christian missionaries and various indigenous socio-reform organizations). Therefore, the numbers these surveys give us cannot be taken as reflective of the total number of orphans in existence in colonial India in the early decades of the twentieth century. P. Mason, Esq., ICS., Deputy Commissioner, Bara Banki to I.D. Elliot, Esquire, ICS, MLC, Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces, 5 October 1925, Council Questions, (7 January 1926), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 30, serial no. 52; Magistrate Farrukhabad to the Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces, 10 November 1925, Council Questions, (7 January 1926), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 30, serial no. 52.

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Orphans in most of the provinces were collected by the police and brought to the magistrate, who then gave them away to suitable candidates. The administration also granted a sum of one or two rupees per month to the claimant for the upkeep of each orphan. The Famine Commission report of 1878–1880 stated, "[s]upposing there are rival applicants for the care of a Hindu or a Mohamedan child, the person most entitled to receive the child would be a co-religionist, provided he is of such respectability and character as will give security for the proper bringing up of the child".[33] The colonial administration sought to portray itself as an "arbitrator" and a "peacemaker" in the debate over the custody of orphans. Its role was restricted to distributing and partially funding the orphans amongst seekers and petitioners who the administration thought would be "well-suited" for the orphans.

In the process of this arbitration, the administration often found itself in a predicament, assessing the utility of its involvement in the issue. In 1863, Sir George Couper, Secretary to the Government of NWPO, expressed this predicament when deciding the scale of pecuniary assistance granted to orphans. He emphatically stated, "[i]n considering the scale to be applied to the orphans, it will probably be well to bear in mind […] that the missionary bodies themselves will, in all likelihood benefit by the labour and intelligence of the former both before and after their attaining to the age of 18 years".[34] The statement clearly signals the suspicion that Christian missionaries would benefit from the labour of orphans receiving government pecuniary assistance. This suspicion was a recurring concern in the official correspondence. The procurement of orphans by Christian missions for the furtherance of their own work on government assistance became the cardinal reason for the contention between the various mission societies and the administration of NWPO. By 1897, the Secretary to the Government of the NWPO, in his letter to the Vice Chairman of the Central Committee, clearly differentiated between two groups of orphans: a) children obtained by the mission under the orders of the government; and b) children, possession of whom the mission had obtained otherwise than under the orders of the government. With regard to the latter class of orphans, the administration stated, missions had no claims over government pecuniary assistance, since they were not "government orphans" and hence the government was not concerned with their upbringing and employment.[35] In the same year, the Secretary to the

33. Extract from the report of the Famine Commission of 1878–80, March 1897, NAI, Foreign, Secret I, A, nos 134–143.

34. Sir George Couper, Secretary to the Government of NWPO, to the Reverend D. Fynes Clinton, Secretary to the Agra Central Relief Committee, 2 February 1863, NAI, Home, Public, A, nos 1–5.

35. The Secretary to the Government of the NWPO to the Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, Calcutta, September 1897, NAI, Revenue and Agriculture [henceforth, R and A], Famine, B, no. 62.

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Government of NWPO also stated, "the missionaries have their own motives in collecting orphans and they generally employ their orphans, either as catechists, or bible readers, or as compositors for the furtherance of their own work and benefit by their labour. Therefore the missions should be held responsible for bringing up their own orphans".[36] By demarcating between "their orphans" (orphans on whose labour the government had no claims) and "our orphans" (orphans on whose labour the government had claims), the NWPO administration displayed its reluctance to take responsibility for indigenous orphans. Nevertheless, when petitions for funds piled up from below it tried to make the best of it in financial terms.

Thus, in 1885, the officiating resident of the princely state of Mysore, in accordance with the orders of the Government of India, distributed 2,220 Mysore famine orphans amongst the mission bodies on the condition that these orphans would be employed as independent agriculturalists[37] on government-owned deserted lands.[38] Likewise, almost a decade later, the Bareilly Arya Samaj Orphanage, which was already receiving three rupees *per mensem* for five of its female orphans from the Dufferin's Fund Association, NWPO, petitioned for a further increase in its funds. The governor of the orphanage Munshi Balmukund and Babu Sita Ram complained, "[l]ast year four girls were sent to the Government Agra Medical School. They were admitted, but as they had not received sufficient training, here, before admission, they have unfortunately, as expected, failed in passing the annual examination. They have been sent back".[39] In order for the girls to be a better fit for the Government Agra Medical School, an increase in the level of education along with an increase in government assistance was sought, or else the managers of the orphanage proposed to discontinue the classes in English. To this end, the secretary of the Countess of Dufferin Fund Association recommended, "[i]f the English class is now abolished, the sum already paid to the manager for the scholarships will be lost and the object of the committee namely to obtain Hindu female pupils for the Agra medical school […] will be a great extent frustrated".[40] The required grant was accordingly sanctioned by the NWPO administration to the Bareilly Arya Samaj Orphanage.

36. Notes on the disposal of orphans left in poor houses at the close of the famine, September 1897, NAI, R and A, Famine, B, no. 62.

37. Similar agricultural settlements were established for criminal tribes in the province of Punjab. See Major, "State and Criminal Tribes", p. 658.

38. Extract from the proceedings of the Chief Commissioner of Mysore, November 1885, NAI, Foreign, Internal, A, nos 39–47.

39. Brief Report on the Arya Samaj Girl's School, 1897–98, Uttar Pradesh, Regional State Archive, Allahabad [hereafter, UPRSA], Education, box no. 50, bundle no. 21, serial no. 413.

40. The Honorary Secretary of the Countess of Dufferin Fund, NWPO, Provincial Branch, to the Secretary to the NWPO, 27 February 1897, UPRSA, Education Department, box no. 50, bundle no. 21, serial no. 413.

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As is evident from the above examples, the colonial administration farmed out the responsibility of orphans under its charge to non-state actors and abstained from taking their sole custody, while still trying to make the best out of the situation. There were two main reasons for the administration's ambivalent stance towards indigenous orphans – the first was its perennial concern over financial parsimony. By farming out the care of orphans to philanthropic bodies, the administration hoped to limit its losses. The second was Queen Victoria's proclamation of "religious neutralism"[41] that could have held back the administration from actively participating in the "orphan problem". By the late nineteenth century, indigenous orphans had become a source of religious contestation. Various Christian mission societies, Hindu and Muslim reform organizations like the Arya Samaj and the *Anjuman-i Himayat-i Islam* (the Society for the Defence of Islam), and individual petitioners fought over protecting the religious identity of "native" orphans.[42]

The administration, in its assumed paternal role, provided financial allowances to the various philanthropic bodies for the upkeep, education, and training of orphans. While, on the one hand, it hoped that the financial assistance for training orphans would produce hard-working, industrious, disciplined, and useful subjects for the Raj, on the other hand, it was highly suspicious of the project and acutely reluctant in granting funds, because it feared that non-state actors would benefit from the labour of the orphans on government pecuniary grants. The picture that emerges therefore is that of an administration that is limited in its power and comparatively weaker in its stature when compared to other child-saving sites like the early-nineteenth-century military orphanages or reformatories for juvenile delinquents.

NON-STATE ACTORS: THE ENDEAVOUR TO MAKE ORPHANS "USEFUL"

Christian missionaries

Christian missionaries were directly involved in the upkeep and education of orphans. Therefore, examining their records gives us direct access to the content, the nature, and the result of training on the ground for both the provider and the provided. Taking their cue from the metropolis, where skill-based

41. After the mutiny of 1857, Queen Victoria famously proclaimed the "religious neutrality" of the Crown state. For a detailed discussion on this, see Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 4 pts (Cambridge, 1995), III.4.

42. Indigenous non-state actors were not homogenous in character and were frequently in contestation with each other on the question of orphans. In this paper, I mostly concentrate on the Arya Samaj, Christian mission societies, and individual petitioners. I acknowledge the presence of other actors than those discussed in this essay. Muslim organizations/groups, Sikh organizations/groups, and princely states (to mention a few) were actively involved in the orphan question.

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training for poor children was seen as invoking a sense of pre-industrial artisanal self-sufficiency,[43] Christian missionaries in the colony designed a similar project aimed primarily at securing self-sufficiency for Indian orphans. As will be shown later, industrial training in the orphanages mostly remained unsuccessful in securing self-sufficiency for orphans, who generally stayed dependent on the orphanages for employment. The training was largely geared towards maintaining class, caste, and gender hierarchies. The instruction was thought to be instrumental in supporting the institution financially, inculcating an appreciation for manual labour, industriousness, hard work, and to provide cheap labour for the newly emerging industries in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Christian missionary engagement with "native" orphans in north India can be traced back to as early as 1840. Secundra Orphanage, Agra (Figure 1), run by the CMS, housed around 300 indigenous orphans in 1841.[44] In order to provide for the future support of orphans, to bring them up as useful members of society, and to make the institution self-supporting, the institution inaugurated its industrial section for both boys and girls in 1840.[45] By the late 1860s, the institution housed 181 boys and 159 girls.[46] The report for the year 1870 specified that the greatest number of children in the orphanage were between nine and thirteen years and were required to learn to read and write. They were also taught Arithmetic, Geography, and History; boys beyond fourteen were engaged in industry.[47] Orphan boys attended the school for six hours[48]and, outside school hours, they were divided into working sections (Table 1).[49] Orphan girls attended school for three hours in the cold and four hours in the hot season[50] and, outside school hours, they were similarly divided into working sections (Table 2).[51] It was often stated (more in the case of girls than boys) that higher literary education and English would be provided to those who were thought to be exceptionally gifted.[52]

Likewise, in other Christian missionary-run orphanages, industrial sections developed as significant appendages to the respective institutions. In the SPG (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Mission) Orphanage for boys in Roorkee, NWPO, the boys received some education in English and in the vernacular, and at the age of twelve were apprenticed at the neighbouring canal

43. Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, p. 124.
44. Rev. F.J. McBride, *Sikandra 1840–1940* (Sikandra, 1940), p. 15.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–17.
46. Report of the Secundra Orphanage from March 1867 to March 1868, pp. 1–2.
47. Report of the Secundra Church Mission Orphanage for 1870, p. 13.
48. Report of the Secundra Orphanage from March 1867 to March 1868, p. 2.
49. Report of the Secundra Church Mission Orphanage for 1870, pp. 13–15.
50. Report of the Secundra Orphanage from March 1867 to March 1868, p. 3.
51. Report of the Secundra Church Mission Orphanage for 1870, pp. 13–15.
52. McBride, *Sikandra*, p. 16.

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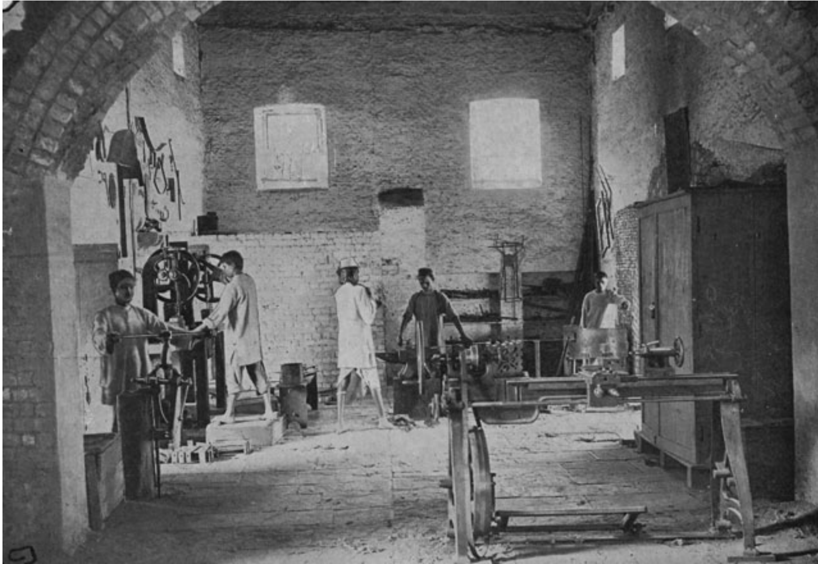

Figure 1. Orphans at Secundra Orphanage iron shop.
The Church Missionary Gleaner, *1 January 1912, p. 3, Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections, University of Birmingham.*

foundry.[53] In the Roman Catholic Orphanage at Agra, the girls learned to read in the vernacular and were taught needlework, knitting, and domestic work.[54] The CMS Industrial Orphanage at Gorakhpur had eighty-six boys and eighty-two girls. Most of the boys learned agriculture, shoemaking, tailoring, and blanket weaving alongside an ordinary vernacular school education. The girls, along with some instruction in English and in the vernacular, also learned plain sewing, knitting, and cooking.[55] In the Irish Presbyterian Mission Orphanage in Gujarat, weaving, tailoring, and cap making were taught. Along with this, nine boys were employed in gardening and thirteen in domestic service. One of the missionaries proudly remarked, that his "own attire was stitched by the orphan boys".[56]

As is evident from the above instances, most of the orphans received a mixture of generally vernacular and skill-based education. Only those who were thought to be exceptionally gifted received English and higher-level education. Industrial training, thus, was perceived as a significant alternative means of

53. Orphanages for native children. Office of the Director of the Public Instruction, NWPO, Allahabad, 11 May 1889, UPRSA, box 68.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*

56. *The Times of India* [hereafter, *ToI*], 30 April 1904, p. 7.

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Table 1. *Outside school hours the orphan boys were divided into the following working sections.*

Section One	General work to keep the compound in order.
Section Two	Drawers of waters and hewers of wood for kitchen and wash house.
Section Three	Washermen.
Section Four	Cooks and bakers.
Section Five	Tailors, making and repairing clothes.
Section Six	Students of the English language, free from manual labour.
Section Seven	Boys age 14 and above who know only the vernacular, or are unable to master the English language satisfactorily, are apprenticed for one of the following occupations: gardener; cook or table servant; carpenter; pressman; type-founder; smith; bookbinder; compositor; clerk or writer.
Section Eight	Youths who have acquired the English language and passed the university entrance examination are taken on as teachers; if they have the heart for spiritual work they are prepared as readers and catechists.

Table 2. *Outside school hours the orphan girls were divided into the following working sections.*

Section One	Sweeping and cleaning.
Section Two	To draw water for cooking and baking.
Section Three	Cooking and baking.
Section Four	Plain sewing.
Section Five	Fancy and ornamental work.
Section Six	Monitors.
Section Seven	The more gifted are trained for school and *zanana* work.

providing employment to the majority of orphans who could not be trained into becoming full-time catechists or teachers. Moreover, the income gathered from selling off the products made by the orphans contributed significantly to maintaining the institutions. The CMS Baranagar Orphanage, Calcutta, housed twenty girls, varying in ages from three to thirteen. In addition to learning the usual school subjects, they spent about two hours every day on making China-headed variety dolls. The doll-making industry contributed substantially to the funds of the Baranagar Orphanage.[57] There was a thriving market for these dolls globally and constant demands were made from many girls' schools belonging to different mission schools. In 1925, the orphanage produced 2,100 dolls,[58] which were then "sent all over India for school

57. *India's Women and China's Daughters*, February 1930, pp. 32–33.
58. *Homes of the East*, July 1925, p. 31.

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prize giving".[59] Thus, the Christian missionaries exploited their global connections to carve out a global market for their products, which were not directly dependent on colonial officials or local market connections.

In addition, the system of apprenticeship in the orphanages became an easy means of providing the newly emerging industries with a cheap source of labour and, at the same time, it contributed financially to maintaining the institution. The report of the Fordham Orphanage, Ajmer, by the Reverend W.B. Hesketh Biggs pointed out that the orphanage often employed boys in railway workshops. From the workshops, the boys earned between three and four *annas*[60] per day and handed four rupees every month to the manager.[61] Thus, once the skills were acquired, boys paid for their own upkeep.

Training in orphanages, however, had more than economic worth. David Arnold, in the context of prisons in India, has adroitly highlighted that from "the 1830s onwards material consideration always mingled with a sense of moral value of labour".[62] Making poor children perform all the domestic work by themselves was central to the Victorian ethos of self-help, discipline, obedience, teaching them to respect the rights of private property and to prepare them for their lives as independent workers. This ideology was widely adhered to in the mission institutions in British India as well. The annual report of the Secundra Orphanage for the year 1863 mentioned that industrial education was not only restricted to the elder boys, "the younger ones are also engaged in part of the day in other occupations, such as clearing the walks, assisting the mali, cleaning the school and other parts of the building".[63] Female orphans proved to be particularly important in the everyday chores of the orphanage. Their labour was effectively utilized for taking care of the infants, cleaning, and cooking.[64] Likewise, the less fortunate children of the domiciled European community in India were trained in domestic work to prevent them from seeing themselves "as belonging to a servant-employing class" and "foster a more working-class consciousness".[65] Contrary to the Eurasian orphans, in the case of "native" orphans, the intention was to make them learn the dignity of manual labour to prepare them for their working lives. While it was clearly stated in the case of girls that they did

59. *Ibid.*
60. *Anna* is a former monetary unit of India and Pakistan. One *anna* is equivalent to one sixteenth of a rupee.
61. *ToI*, 8 May 1901, p. 3.
62. David Arnold, "Labouring for the Raj: Convict Work Regimes in Colonial India, 1836–1939", in Christian Giuseppe de Vito and Alex Lichtenstein (eds), *Global Convict Labour* (Leiden [etc.], 2015), pp. 199–221, 199.
63. Agra Church Missionary Association and Orphan Institution Committee [hereafter, ACMOC],1863, twenty-first report, Secundra Orphan Press, 1862, p. 33. *Mali* is the Hindi word for gardener.
64. Report of the Secundra Church Mission Orphanage, 1870, p. 15.
65. Mizutani, *The Meaning of White*, p. 163.

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not want them "to be very accomplished",[66] the training of the boys was mostly focused on semi-skilled or low skilled manual labouring jobs like shoemaking, tailoring, blanket weaving, cooking, cleaning, washing, gardening, printing, and carpentry, which ensured the reproduction of their marginality in society. The training of both the male and female orphans thus reproduced class, caste, and gender hierarchies.

Social control and its limits

There is an ever-growing and rich literature on how education facilitated social control in schools and colonial institutions of incarceration.[67] Scholars have emphasized that education, rather than being an equalizing force, has maintained the social, cultural, gender, and economic hierarchies existing in the society. In the orphanages, too, the aspect of social control was seen in its full swing. At the same time, it is important to underscore the limitations of the social control theory. In recent years, scholars have highlighted the manner in which colonial institutions were appropriated by those who it sought to subdue and control.[68] To foreground both the process of social control and the fissures in the practice of social control, I have used a small sample of the employment status of twelve orphans in five different Christian missionary orphanages once they had reached the legal age of maturity (eighteen years).[69]

In 1912, the Reverend P. Graminga, D.D., the Bishop of Allahabad, petitioned the Government of the United Provinces for a grant to give government famine orphans in the Roman Catholic Orphanage at Shampura, Saugor, Central Provinces a start in life.[70] Subsequently, the United Provinces administration prepared a list of twelve government famine orphans in five orphanages (three in the United Provinces and two in the Central Provinces) who had attained the age of

66. ACMOC, twenty-first report, 1863, Secundra Orphan Press, 1864, p. 20.

67. See footnote 4.

68. Sen notes that some parents and children saw reformatories "as an economic arrangement that suited their needs". Similarly, Sara Hodges has shown how, during famines, lock hospitals were appropriated by the women as shelters that provided food, when it was difficult to find it elsewhere. Satadru Sen, "A Separate Punishment: Juvenile Offenders in Colonial India", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 63 (2004), pp. 81–104, 95; Sara Hodges, "'Looting' the Lock Hospital", p. 379.

69. Given the paucity and challenges of finding sources on the employment trajectories of orphans, this small sample of twelve orphans becomes a very valuable source of information. Even though these were government famine orphans, there is no evidence, whatsoever, to suggest that there were drastic differences in the way government famine orphans and mission orphans (orphans directly taken into custody by the Christian missionaries) were trained. Hence, the sample reflects, to a large extent, the employment possibilities for the orphans in Christian orphanages.

70. Right Reverend P. Graminga, D.D., Bishop of Allahabad, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces, 7 June 1912, Special grant to certain orphanages for starting orphans in life (December 1912), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.

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eighteen years on 1 April 1912.[71] It enquired from the managers of the various orphanages about the orphans' future employment prospects after reaching the age of eighteen years and whether a grant would be needed. Though a small sample, the responses of the orphanage's managers are indicative of where the orphans eventually landed in terms of employment (Table 3).[72]

The manager of the Christian Orphanage Mahoba, Hamirpur, United Provinces replied that the three orphan girls for whom the enquiry was made had not been discharged from the orphanage. The manager further stated that "nor would they wish to be discharged except to become wives. We consider our orphanage children as our own and would not send one away except for her own good or for the good of the greater number". Of the three orphan girls enquired about, the manager stated that Paragia is still in Bilaspur at school and "if she does well in school and passes her examination […] she may be left there for further training as school teacher". Jaraiya "is here with us with no immediate prospect for marriage. Punain alias Chabili will be married in October". The manager also stated that, apart from the above-mentioned girls, three years ago there had been several other names that were dropped from the government roll because the girls were presumably eighteen years of age.[73]

The administration, however, refused to provide funds for the government famine orphans whose names had already been removed from the list. The administration maintained that the enquiry was only limited to orphans who attained the age of eighteen years on 1 April 1912. Accordingly, a grant of twenty-five rupees was awarded to the orphanage as dowry money for the orphan girl who was due to get married.

The manager of the Zanana Bible Mission Orphanage, Sultanpur, Oudh, United Provinces stated the "orphan Sitaria has not yet been discharged from the orphanage […] it is hoped she will go to Allahabad to be trained as a teacher".[74] The manager of the Roman Catholic Orphanage, Sardhana, Meerut, United Provinces reported that the orphan Bhikwa alias Raphael, "has been earning his livelihood pretty fair". However, the other one, Mulua I alias Francis, "is not yet fit to earn a livelihood […] he has been rather

71. Special grants to certain orphanages for starting orphans, December 1912, UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.

72. The Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces to the Manager of the Roman Catholic Orphanage, Saugor, Central Provinces; Wesleyan Orphanage, Jubbulpore, Central Provinces; Christian Orphanage Mahoba, Hamirpur; Catholic Orphanage Sardhana, Meerut; Zanana Bible and Medical Mission Orphanage, Sultanpur, 5 August 1912, Special grant to certain orphanages for starting orphans in life (December 1912), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.

73. The Manager of the Christian Orphanage in Mahoba to the Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces, 8 August 1912, Special grant to certain orphanages for starting orphans in life (December 1912), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.

74. The Manager of the Zanana Bible Mission Orphanage, Sultanpur, Oudh to the Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces, 8 August 1912, Special grant to certain orphanages for starting orphans in life (December 1912), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.

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Table 3. *The list of orphans who attained the age of eighteen years on 1 April 1912.*

Number	Orphanage	Name of orphan	Date on which attained 18 years
1	Wesleyan Orphanage, Jubbulpore, Central Provinces	Chakai alias Jidaun	1 April 1912
2	Christian Orphanage, Mahoba, Hamirpur, United Provinces	Jaraiya	Ditto
3	Ditto	Punain alias Chabili	Ditto
4	Ditto	Paragia	Ditto
5	Roman Catholic Orphanage Sardhana, Meerut, United Provinces	Mulua I alias Francis	Ditto
6	Ditto	Bhikwa alias Raphael	Ditto
7	Roman Catholic Orphanage, Saugor, Central Provinces	Budhua alias Marcello	Ditto
8	Ditto	Kalbasia alias Tobia	Ditto
9	Ditto	Sarsulia alias Seconda	Ditto
10	Ditto	Parmia alias Rosalia	Ditto
11	Ditto	Bafati alias Lodovico	Ditto
12	Zanana Bible and Medical Mission Orphanage, Sultanpur, United Provinces	Paragia alias Sitaria	Ditto

dull. I am trying to teach him tailoring".[75] Another option that the manager suggested was to start him in machine-knitting business. In the former case, between thirty and forty rupees were sought from the administration; and in the latter, a total sum of 160 rupees was requested.[76] The administration refused to pay for any training of this orphan and asserted that "[g]rants will be made only when a definite trade has been taught and money is required to set up an orphan *independently* in that trade" (emphasis added). The administration further added that tailoring "would seem the safer and more generally useful trade. The machine would be liable to get out of order".[77]

75. Special grant to certain orphanages for starting orphans in life, December 1912, UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.

76. *Ibid.*

77. The Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces to the Manager of the Roman Catholic Orphanage, Sardhana, Meerut, 10 October 1912, Special grant to certain orphanages for starting orphans in life (December 1912), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.

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On receiving the enquiry from the administration, the Reverend P. Graminga, who had first petitioned the United Provinces administration seeking pecuniary assistance for government famine orphans of the Roman Catholic Orphanage in Shampura, Saugor, Central Provinces, stated that a pecuniary grant would be of little benefit and a grant of wasteland contiguous to the Shampura colony would be of greater assistance in settling the orphans for life.[78] Echoing the same sentiment, the manager of the Roman Catholic Orphanage reported that all the orphans for whom the enquiry was made "are employed on the orphanage industrial works, but are still dependent on the establishment for their maintenance". He further maintained that "land cultivation is about the only occupation our natives take to, and one that suits the preferments of the colony". Hence, he suggested, a grant of wasteland to settle orphans on it was a more viable course of action.[79] The manager of the Wesleyan Orphanage in Jubbulpore, Central Provinces, stated that Chakai alias Jidaun, "is learning the work of a compositor in a local press". He further opined that,

> it will be difficult to say whether he will be able to really take up this work [...] as he is very small and backward for his age, I do not feel justified in recommending that any sum be granted for the purpose of giving him a start in life as I fear for a very long time the lad will require oversight and partial support.[80]

From the above replies, it is clear that a fair number of orphans remained dependent on the orphanage authorities for employment and maintenance after they attained the legal age of adulthood. For most of them, training provided in the orphanage rarely resulted in any substantial employment opportunities. For orphan girls, finding them employment was certainly not the primary concern and the highest achievement envisioned for them was to get them married off within the "native" Christian community. Writing in 1921, Sam Higginbottom similarly underscored the failure of the industrial instruction in the orphanages in making orphans self-reliant. He expressed that "the children developed so slowly and when turned out of the orphanage were able to earn so little".[81] He further deplored that the caste rules of Hindu society adversely affected employment opportunities for orphans:

78. The Right Reverend P. Graminga, D.D., Bishop of Allahabad, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces, 17 August 1912, Special grant to certain orphanages for starting orphans in life (December 1912), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.
79. The Reverend Father Peter Mary, O.C., Manager of the Roman Catholic Orphanage, Saugor, Central Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces, 16 August 1912, Special grant to certain orphanages for starting orphans in life (December 1912), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.
80. The Manager of the Wesleyan Orphanage, Jubbulpore, Central Provinces to the Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces, 15 August 1912, Special grant to certain orphanages for starting orphans in life (December 1912), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 43.
81. Sam Higginbottom, *The Gospel and the Plow* (New York, 1921), p. 35.

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> If the missionary trains a boy for one of these caste trades, he has to employ the boy whom he has trained. If the boy leaves the mission in order to follow his trade in the open market he immediately comes into conflict with the caste trade unions, which will not only not admit him, but which will boycott anyone who employs him, until he is compelled to fall back into the ranks of the casual labourer and thus the missionaries' effort is largely wasted. The boy also does not get a fair chance in life.[82]

Not all orphans became labourers or servants, however. Some did rise up the ranks to become teachers, writers, and catechists. The CMS Orphanage in Bhagulpore, Bihar, reported that, "hitherto the orphanage has been turning out only servants, teachers and writers".[83] There are examples to suggest that education in the Christian mission orphanages also led to a life of financial security and, in some cases, also provided some degree of social mobility. Moreover, much like colonial institutions of incarceration, orphanages were also used as places of refuge in times of crisis like famine and plague.[84] Running away was another popular way for orphans to express their dissent – in the year 1864, washing was introduced in the CMS Secundra Orphanage with some opposition from the orphans. The orphanage authorities complained, "the boys considered such work below their caste. Some tried even running away, but came back soon".[85]

Arya Samaj

By the late nineteenth century, the Arya Samaj had begun to be deeply interested in the question of orphans. Consequently, a chain of Arya Samaj orphanages was established, mostly in north India. Ferozepore Arya *Anathalaya* (orphanage) was the first one to be built in 1877 by Rai Mathura Das.[86] The Dayanand Orphanage Ajmer was founded in 1895, the Hindu Orphanages at Lahore and Amritsar were established in 1897. Many makeshift, temporary orphanages were also established for immediate relief in the famine-affected areas.[87] Dayanand Orphanage Lucknow was

82. *Ibid*., p. 38.
83. *Church Missionary Record*, December 1870, p. 383.
84. See footnote 68.
85. ACMOC, twenty-second report, 1864, Secundra Orphan Press, 1865, p. 19.
86. In 1897, Lala Lajpat Rai became the general secretary of Ferozepore Orphanage. Lajpat Rai, *The Arya Samaj: An Account of Its Origin, Doctrines, and Activities, with a Biographical Sketch of the Founder* (Bombay, 1915), p. 211. Pandit Vishun Lal Sharma, *Hand-Book of the Arya Samaj* (Allahabad, 1912), p. 99. *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai* mentions the establishment date of Ferozepore Arya *Anathalaya* as 1880. See B.R. Nanda (ed.), *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai,* 13 vols (Delhi, 2003), I, p. 122.
87. Nanda, *The Collected Works*, I, p. 123. Also see Sri Ram Sharma, *Mahatma Hansraj: Maker of the Modern Punjab* (Lahore, 1941), p.183.

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inaugurated in 1915 and Arya *Anathalaya* Delhi in 1918.[88] Training in Arya Samaj orphanages was divided into three sections: religious instruction; basic reading and writing; and industrial training. Highlighting the popularity of industrial training in the Arya Samaj Orphanage, Delhi, in his book *Anatha: Hinduon ki Nalayki, Musalman Gundon ki Shrartein aur Anathalayon ka Bhandaphor* (Orphan: Hindu's Inadequacy, Muslim Goon's Naughtiness and Exposing the Orphanage) (hereafter, *Anatha*) Jagdish Chandra Shastri opined that, "[t]he orphanage officials had understood this principle very well. Hence, they gave academic training to very few boys. In this age of industry, most of them (orphans) were being trained in industrial pursuits and thus various types of industries were running unhindered".[89]

Most of the Arya Samaj orphanages had industrial sections. During the famine of 1896–1897, the Arya Samaj had set up a temporary orphanage at Bhiwani. The orphanage, apart from teaching Hindi, also introduced *dari* (carpet) making. More than thirty boys were employed in both these branches.[90] In the Dayanand *Anath Ashram* (orphanage) in Ajmer, the orphans were taught weaving, knitting, carpet making, and other industries.[91] Likewise, the inspection report of the Arya Samaj Industrial Orphanage in Bareilly listed the total number of students in attendance as fifty girls and eighty-four boys, with ages ranging from six months to eighteen years. The main subjects taught in the orphanage and the number of orphans attending it were as follows: bookbinding (four); band (twelve); carpentry (four); *dhurree* (cotton rug) making (four); printing press (two); and tailoring (four). The remainder attended various schools in the city.[92] Hence, much like in the Christian missionary orphanages, a mixture of mostly vernacular and skill-based training was imparted in the Arya Samaj orphan homes, but academic or book learning often took a back seat. Illustrating how industrial training took time away from academic learning in the Delhi Arya Samaj Orphanage, Shastri highlights that,

88. From Aw Ibbotson, Esq. MC, MBE, ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Lucknow to The Commissioner, Lucknow Division, 16 September 1920, Acquisition of Land for Dayanand Orphanage at Nazirabad in Lucknow district, (September 1920), UPSA, Scarcity Department, file no. 11.

89. Jagdish Chandra Shastri, *Anatha: Hinduon ki Nalayki, Musalman Gundon ki Shrartein aur Anathalayon ka Bhandaphor* (Allahabad, 1929), p. 19.

90. Nanda, *The Collected Works*, I, p. 133.

91. Sharma, *Hand-book of the Arya Samaj*, p. 100.

92. Inspection Report of the Arya Samaj Industrial Orphanage, Bareilly by the Principal Govt. Central Wood Working Institute, Bareilly, 1918, UPSA, Industries, file no. 561. The band training mostly consisted of learning to play musical instruments like drums. The band as a subject of industrial training for orphans was not new. The late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century military orphanages employed most of their orphans in military bands as drummers and fifers. However, there were significant differences in the nature of the two bands, which accounted for the official scorn towards it. Additionally, band training in most of the Arya Samaj orphanages financially reaped better than other trades for the institution and hence gradually became the most popular subject, with most of the bigger boys trained in it.

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There is no need to spend on the band. The orphanage band is already there! The school was open that day and a very important piece in poetry was being taught. Soon the order came that he must join the band. Since he was studying and there were only twenty minutes left for the bell to ring, he decided to wait for the class to be over. He entered the orphanage fearing the consequence. The orphanage supervisor, with a stick in his hand, was boiling with anger. That day he was flogged. No one paid any heed to his screams and he had to instantly join the band. By the time he returned, it was too late for the meal. Chapatti and lentils were no longer edible. He tried to eat but could not. He slept on the cot and groaned in pain for the entire day; nobody cared enough to ask after him.[93]

The above narration not only underscores the significance of industrial training over academic learning, but also highlights the deep-seated power structures operating within the orphanages and the omnipresence of violence in everyday interactions. The popularity and relevance of industrial training amongst the orphanage authorities is in stark contrast to the dismal employment rate resulting from it. The Collector of Bareilly, expressing doubts about the industrial section of the Bareilly Arya Samaj Orphanage, opines, "there is a good deal of eyewash about the industry struck and I think the Rai Sahib's band is the only show that really pays. Still as funds are short it is not fair to ask too much when the industries are in their infancy".[94] He gives further details on the nature of training imparted in the institution:

Just at present from what I can remember of the three visits I have paid to the institution they are doing a little carpentry – a little *jharan* weaving and some shoemaking of sorts (without leather). But there are not many boys on the job as the band takes a lot of time and moreover when a boy has learnt a little he is inclined to run away. The Rai Sahib is always coming to me asking for assistance to recover runaways. However, I think it would be reasonable to give a small grant […] I think they waste far too much time on this beastly band – it pays but that is its only justification and the bigger boys who might be learning useful work are swallowed by it.[95]

There are two significant aspects to the Collector's remarks on the Bareilly Arya Samaj Orphanage: the first is the official criticism that the employment of orphans in a musical band garnered. The orphanage band employed the largest number of bigger boys and was a major source of income in at least two of the Arya Samaj orphanages (the Delhi Arya Samaj Orphanage and the Bareilly Arya Samaj Orphanage). Unlike the case of mixed-race orphans in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century military orphanages, where almost eighty per cent of mixed-race orphans were employed in military bands as drummers and fifers, the official scorn towards employment of

93. Shastri, *Anatha*, p. 25.
94. L.M. Stubbs Esq. ICS, Collector of Bareilly, to the Commissioner of the Rohilkhand Division, 20 September, UPSA, Industries, file no. 561.
95. *Ibid.*

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"native" orphans in Arya Samaj bands is intriguing. Underlying the disdain is probably the difference in the nature of the two types of band – the Arya Samaj band, unlike the EIC military band, was most likely used during festivals and functions related to the death, birth, and marriage of local people. Furthermore, the chief source of income of the Bareilly Arya Samaj Orphanage was subscriptions and donations from the public along with government grants.[96] Most of these donations came from religious ceremonies and general rejoicing in marriage, the birth of a child, recovery from illness, promotion at work, and the like.[97] Hence, it is no surprise that these bands became a popular aspect of industrial training in the orphanage. It also highlights the manner in which traditional forms of giving were incorporated into modern, institutionalized forms of philanthropy.[98]

Secondly, and significantly, the report highlights the simultaneous process of social control and its practical limitations. If, on the one hand, orphans exercised their agency by running away when they thought they were sufficiently trained to earn their living, on the other hand, the mention of training in *leatherless* shoemaking highlights a caste-based training practiced in the orphanages. *Chamars* are the "untouchable" caste found mostly in north India and are considered to be traditionally engaged in the occupation of tanning. The move towards employment of five orphans in leatherless shoemaking hints at a caste consciousness in assigning trades to orphans. It is intriguing to see the manner in which caste hierarchies penetrate the training of orphans in Arya Samaj orphanages, despite their stated principle of no distinction based on caste. The annual report of Dayanand Orphanage Ajmer, illustrates some interesting examples in this regard. Out of fourteen orphans listed in the report, the only two *lohar* (blacksmith) orphans were assigned to *lohar* training, which further attests to the caste-based allocation of tasks in the orphanage.

The report also highlights the inability of training in the orphanage to produce any substantial employment opportunity and its role in maintaining the gender, caste, and class hierarchies of the society. For most of the orphans, the eventual employment history is missing, but for those available, it can be clearly seen that none rise above the rank of servants, or probably blacksmiths. Considering their education level, it is unlikely that any of the orphans rose above these ranks (Table 4).[99]

In orphanages where the industrial section was not developed, the orphans were sent to nearby industries for training. Such was the case with the

96. Bareilly Arya Samaj Orphanage to the Director of Public Instruction, United Provinces, Allahabad, 20 March 1918, UPSA, Industries, no. 561.

97. Report of the Bareilly Arya Samaj Orphanage for 1886–1887, (1897–98), UPRSA, Education, box no. 50, bundle no. 21, serial no. 413.

98. See footnote 27 for literature on self-civilizing missions.

99. *Dayanand Anathalaya Ajmer ki Dwitya Report*, January 1896–May 1897.

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Amritsar Hindu Orphanage, where Lala Raghunath Das employed the orphans in his carpet factory.[100] The orphans' wages formed the principal source of income to these orphanages. Lala Lajpat Rai emphatically stated, "no less than rupees 4,797 came in the form of wages of the orphans, while subscriptions did not even amount to rupees 1000 during this period".[101] Hence, apprenticeship developed not only as a means to financially maintain the institution, but also provided the late-nineteenth-century emerging industries access to cheap labour. Similarly, access to orphan labour became a significant aspect of the exploitative relationship between the supervisor of the orphanage and the orphans. The social reformer Shastri captures well the harrowing experience of labour extraction in the everyday life of the orphan in his book *Anatha*,

> They should do something for the orphanage. There were a lot of works in the orphanage and orphans were dragged into them. Service to the manager/supervisor of the orphanage was their foremost duty, for which of course they could never demand a salary. Whether they desired to work was never considered, service is service, and they were expected to do it. They would fan the supervisor for hours and in case of failure to do so, would be slapped. In case the supervisor/manager of the orphanage needed a *tonga* [a light horse-drawn two wheeled vehicle used in India] five to ten orphans would search all over Delhi and there would be eight *tongas* available at his doorstep.[102]

Individual charitable persons[103]

Along with the various Christian mission societies and indigenous socio-religious reform bodies, individual charitable persons became deeply interested in the question of orphans. While, in some accounts, the possible labour benefits of orphans were explicitly expressed, in others moral and economic concerns were juxtaposed. In 1878, an interesting petition was addressed to the Famine Commissioner, Mysore, by Standish Lee of the woollen and carpet factory. He stated, "my proposal possesses very great advantages over the system of orphanages. Charity forms no factor in my terms, and I am free to admit that I make the proposal for my own advantage, but only to the extent, as if I were dealing with free labour".[104]

On the other hand, in the training imparted in the J.N. Petit Parsee Orphanage, moral and economic concerns were brought together: eleven boys were taught the "value and dignity of labour"[105] by sending them out

100. Nanda, *Collected Works*, I, p. 138.
101. *Ibid.*
102. Shastri, *Anatha*, p. 24.
103. They came from various caste, class, and religious backgrounds.
104. From Standish Lee, Esq., Woollen and Carpet Factory, to C.A. Elliott, Esq., Famine Commissioner, Mysore, 16 April 1878, (Bangalore), NAI, Home, Public, no. 143.
105. *ToI*, 6 May 1895, p. 3.

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Table 4. *Education level of orphans in the Dayanand Orphanage Ajmer.*

Name	Caste	Age	Level of education
Kaluram	Kshatriya (क्षत्री)	9	Primary level education in Hindi and arithmetic.
Kashinath	Kumhar (कुम्भकार)	13	Primary level education in Hindi and arithmetic.
Nathulal	Caste unknown	3	No details on education.
Pratap	Lohar (लुहार)	12	Is being taught the trade of *lohar* (blacksmith).
Ram Ratan	Lohar (लुहार)	10	Is being taught the trade of *lohar* (blacksmith).
Vishna	Vaishya (वैश्य)	13	Is being educated, the details of which are missing.
Janaki	Malin (मालिन)	16	Details are missing.
Anandi	Caste not mentioned	8	Details are missing.
Parvati	Brahmin (ब्राह्मणी)	9	Knows primary level Hindi, first and second volume of *Narisudshpravartak*, *Satyarth Prakash*, *Sandhya Ved Mantra Bhajan* and basic arithmetic. Is now under the guardianship of Babu Mathura Prasad's sister.
Raja	Vaishya (वैश्य)	5	Is being educated, the details of which are missing.
Bhagwan Charan	Kshatriya (क्षत्री) (was doubted to be a Muslim)	14	Trained in the soap company and then employed as a servant in Kalyan Singh's house.
Harihar Nath	Brahmin (ब्राह्मण)	15	Studied until 8th standard. Since he was getting older Rajnarayan Ji and other men arranged for his food, shelter, and clothing.
Balu	Jat (जाट)	10	Ran away.
Gaya Prasad	Brahmin (ब्राह्मण)	11	Was adopted by Constable Nand Lal.

to learn mechanical arts at the National Mill, at the cabinet-making establishment of Mr. Jamsetji Nowrajee, at the piece-goods shops of Mr. Cowasjee Muncherjee Kapadia, at the bookbinding establishment of Mr. Eduljee Furdoonjee, and in the Central India Mill.[106] Likewise, in the Hindu Mahajan[107] Orphanage, opened in 1900, the year of the great Gujarat famine, orphans were taught handloom weaving and carpet weaving. Carpet weaving was the main industry taught to the boys, and embroidery of gold and silver thread to girls. The report of the orphanage stated, "the carpets manufactured in the factory of the orphanage have acquired so much renown that the famous

106. *Ibid.*
107. Mahajans are the money lending community in north India.

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ones have been exhibited at the navsari building at Bombay",[108] further popularizing and establishing a national market for the products produced in the orphanage.

Thus, along with teaching them the value and dignity of labour, apprenticeship developed as a means through which cheap orphan labour was accessed for the newly emerging private industrial enterprises of the claimants. Reform through work became the central principle on which these institutions operated. However, unlike in the metropolis or in the case of the late-nineteenth-century Eurasian orphans, where the moral aspects of labour preceded the economic utility of training, with regard to "native" orphans, the moral and economic aspects of training went hand in hand.

CONCLUSION

This article makes two arguments: first, it argues that zooming in on the "native" orphans in the colonial Indian context can help us move beyond the binary of the colonial state and poor children that has hitherto structured the existing research on child "rescue" missions in colonial India. I assert that examining the relationship between non-state actors and, more significantly, indigenous actors and Indian orphans has the potential to highlight the fissures in state power. I have shown that not only was the state reluctant to involve itself with "native" orphans, largely due to financial and practical concerns, but it was also greatly dependent on indigenous and Christian mission charity for child-welfare in the colony. Therefore, a less Foucauldian perspective might be more productive in analysing the nuances of child-welfare in colonial India.[109] In other words, taking a bottom-up, rather than a top-down, approach can be more successful in studying the intricacies of the child-welfare system. When we look from below, the fissures in state power become evident. The deployment of this approach, I have shown, helps us look beyond the state civilizing mission and underlines the existence of parallel and, at times, contrary civilizing missions – Christian and self-civilizing missions.

Second, the essay makes a case for a more active inclusion of education as an analytical category in our understanding of child labour in the Indian subcontinent. It looks at the tensions inherent in the education of orphans, which, on the one hand, strove to give orphans a self-sufficient life and, on the other, tried to restrict its extent so as to not dislocate them from their socially designated class and caste occupations. The apparently humanitarian act of educating

108. *ToI*, 21 August 1919, p. 13.

109. Maksudyan and Major have made a similar argument in a different context. See Nazan Maksudyan, "State 'Parenthood' and Vocational Orphanages (*Islahhanes*): Transformation of Urbanity and Family Life", *The History of the Family*, 16 (2011), pp. 172–181, 178–179; Major, "State and Criminal Tribes", p. 659.

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orphans to help them lead a self-supporting life had many layers to it that need to be teased out. Training in the institutions was tilted more in favour of the institution than of the orphans themselves. Industrial training imparted in the orphanages was more successful in maintaining the institution through effective utilization of orphan labour than it was in providing orphans with a mode of future employment. A comparative glance at the training imparted to Eurasian and indigenous orphans in the late nineteenth century further enhances its labour aspect. The training in the case of the former was geared more towards instilling a desire to perform labour that would train them not to identify themselves as belonging to a servant-employing class.[110] It was more about a desire for discipline than about actual production of labour. In the case of the indigenous orphans, the moral value of labour was accompanied by the intention to actually produce labour; or, as Ann Laura Stoler has argued in the case of Native Americans, "the Indian should not only be taught how to work, but also that it is his duty to do so".[111]

110. Satoshi Mizutani, *The Meaning of White*, p. 163.

111. Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies", *The Journal of American History*, 88 (2001), pp. 829–865, 855–56.

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