

**Macaulay and his Cognitive Imagination: Defining Knowledge  
in Contemporary India**

**Anjan Saha**

**Abstract**

This paper examines and explains how Thomas Babington Macaulay laid the foundations of what we might call the cognitive paradigm for modern India, which we follow even now. He played a key role in the making of a future class of mediators and middlemen for the Empire. He was instrumental in creating many of the institutional frameworks and psychological conditions, that even seventy years after the formal demise of colonial rule, remain unchanged to the core. This is as true today in the so-called globalised era of American domination, as it was in the nineteenth century during the high noon of British Imperialism. But it is high time that we question the dominant values governing our society. The main problem is the popular discrimination between the skilled and schooled – rooted in the accepted notions of what counts as knowledge in the first place. However, it has also to be admitted that in defining knowledge, colonial notion was accentuated further by our own hierarchy of caste.

Key words: knowledge, cognition, epistemology, critical noun, PLSI.