

# Education System in India during British Rule

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The current system of education, with its western style and content, was introduced & founded by the British in the 20th century, following recommendations by Macaulay. It was earlier originated by William Adam in 1813. He came to Calcutta to know about the structure of Indian education started by Christian Missionaries. British records show that indigenous education was widespread in the 18th century, with a school for every temple, mosque or village in most regions of the country. The subjects taught included Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Theology, Law, Astronomy, Metaphysics, Ethics, Medical Science and Religion. The schools were attended by students representative of all classes of society. But scholars have questioned the validity of such an argument. They argue that proponents of indigenous education fail to recognize the importance of the widespread use of printed books in the West since the sixteenth century, which led to a remarkable advancement of knowledge. Printed books were not used in Indian schools till the 1820s or even later. There were institutions such as Gresham's college in London that encouraged scientific learning. In fact, there were a number of such academic and scientific societies in England, often supported by Puritan and non-Conformist merchants, the like of which probably did not exist in India. The entire claim of indigenous education proponents is based on the thesis advocated by Dharampal which says that there was a general decline in Indian society and economy with the coming of British rule. In the process, indigenous education suffered. This, however, is too broad a generalization, and the exact impact of British rule on different regions at different times has to be studied more carefully before we conclude that the curve everywhere steadily declined. He argues that pre-British schools and colleges were maintained by grants of revenue-free land. The East India Company, with its policy of maximizing land revenue, stopped this and thus starved the Indian education system of its financial resources. Again, we need more detailed evidence to show how farinam lands were taken over by the government. More often, military officers, zamindar and talukdars were deprived of revenue-free land rather than temples, mosques, madrasas. Recent

research has revealed that farinam lands continued to exist well into the nineteenth century, much more than was previously suspected. The educational ideas of Lord Macaulay are known as Macaulay's minute. Lord Macaulay comes to India on 10 June, 1834 as a member of law East India Company. He was a learned scholar and good orator. Bentick appointed him head of Public information Committee. He agreed with his ideas of Charles Grant. He, too, believed that only English education can provide knowledge of Indian people. Before discussing Macaulay's Minute let's discuss the factors responsible for it.

East India Company was established in 1599 for the purpose of trading with India. But in the course of time it influenced the development of educational system in India. In brief, the following efforts were made by British before 1814:

1. Opening of School
2. Many Educational Policy (1765-1813)
3. Policy of Appeasement.
4. Role of British Parliament..

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF WOODS DESPATCH (1854)**

Wood's Despatch was a grant report consisting 100 paras. John Stuart Mill, the great British scholar and thinker, prepared its draft. H.R. James said that this Dispatch is Magna Carta of Indian education. Some of the most important recommendations of Wood's Despatch are:

Wood's Despatch discusses in detail all the important aspects of education. Some of the most important recommendations of Wood's Despatch are as follows:

1. Educational responsibility.
2. Curriculum of Education.

3. Curriculum of Educations.
  4. Medium of Instruction.
  5. Establishment of Education Department.
  6. Establishment of Universities.
  7. Establishment of Graded Schools.
  8. Grant- in- Aid.
  9. Teacher Education.
  10. Education and Employment.
  11. Women Education.
  12. Vocational Education.
  13. Muslim Education.
  14. Secular Education.
  15. Books in Indian Languages.
  16. Expansion of Education on Mass level.
- Schedule of Primary Schools according to the Provinces in 1882
- Province Aided School Schools Adm. By Edu. Deptt  
Un- Aided School
- Bengal 47,374 28 3,265
- Madras 13,323 1,263
- Bombay 73 3,954 3,954
- Punjab 278 17,549 13,109
- Central Province 364 894 -
- Assam 1,254 7 497
- Berar 209 267 258 -
- North- Western
- Province 243 5,561 6,712

In 1882, the total population of these province was 1, 95, 87,512 and 20, 61,541 children were studying in primary schools.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BASIC EDUCATION SCHEME**

In 1935, Government of India Act (1935) was

implemented. As a result, Congress came to power in various provinces in 1937. It provided an opportunity to implement the scheme but Government didn't have Proper budget for free and compulsory education. On the other hand Government didn't want to introduce new taxes. Gandhi ji proposed a Scheme to solve this problem. He said that education shouldn't be stopped due to lack of money. Setting time of 7 years for free and compulsory education he said that besides education the child should be provided knowledge of Craft-works and should work as a productive unit. This will make them self-dependent and aims of education would also be realized.

## **AIMS OF BASIC EDUCATION SCHEMES**

### **1. Development of "Basic Qualities.**

The main aim of Basic Education was to develop the basic QUALITIES OF THE STUDENTS. Every child has some innate qualities; to draw out these qualities was the main aim of basic education.

### **2. Economic Aim:**

Gandhi ji believed that education should not be limited to intellectual aspect only; it should have economic aim also. According to him "Education ought to be for them a kind of insurance against unemployment."

## **MAIN FEATURES OF BASIC EDUCATION SCHEME**

The main features of Basic Education scheme are discussed as follows:

1. Free and Compulsory Education.
2. Craft Centered.
3. Mother Tongue.
4. Education through Activities.
5. Related with life.
6. Cult of non- violence
7. Self Supporting.
8. Priority of Rural Schools.

### **SARGENT PLAN (1944)**

## **INTRODUCTION:-**

The government of India drew its attention towards the development –plan for India in the post –world war-II

context. In relation to setting up a plan for development of education of India, was asked John Sargent, Educational Advisor to Government of India, was asked to prepare a report on this. He submitted his report before Central Advisory Board of Education in 1944. The board accepted its recommendations and recommended its implementation.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PRIMARY OR BASIC EDUCATION**

1. Universal, Compulsory and Free Education.
2. Type of instructions.
3. Types of Basic schools.
4. Based on Craft.
5. Teacher-Student Ratio.
6. Women Teacher.
7. Medium of Instruction.
8. Teaching of English
9. Corporate Living.
10. Internal Examination.
11. Improvement of Standard.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SECONDARY EDUCATION:**

1. Duration.
2. Admission through Selections.
3. Entry Age.
4. General and Technical Schools.
5. Fees.
6. Scholarship.
7. Curriculum.
8. Pay- Scales.
9. Aim.
10. Medium
11. Basis of University Education.

IMPACT OF BRITISH COLONIZATION ON

### **EDUCATION**

When the Mughal Empire began to crumble, weak political administration gave way to anarchy. During this period of instability, Europeans began to visit India for trade and among the many, who visited, it was the British who made the most impact and the rest is history. The British who first came to India for trade established The East India Company but soon exploited the prevailing political situation to establish themselves firmly as rulers. In the field of education the essay by Charles grant called "Observations " became famous for creating a controversy between the old Indian system of education and the occidental view , which dismissed the Indian system , its literature and its languages and called for reforms in the Indian system. Though he was opposed by more understanding British, such as Warren Hastings and Lord Minto , Grant and his supporters( Lord Macaulay ) introduced the East India Company Charter , which was passed in 1813 and paved the way for the British system of education.

The British were not primarily interested in the education of the hoi poli and introduced what was called "downward filtration "in education. This was a scheme to provide education to the Indian elite only and through them they expected the benefits of education to filter down to the common citizens. In the traditional pre British system of education, which existed, while there was diversity there was hardly any disparity in standards. The disparity of the educational system, which was non-existent till then, appeared only after 1835 because schools were started based on the English pattern of education. Schools offering English medium education were given state recognition and this automatically de-recognized the indigenous system. A gradual process of educational reforms established elite residential schools for the children of the British. Usually located in the cooler climate of the hill stations, it suited the

British children unused to the heat and dust of the land their fathers had colonized. But such schools effectively started a system of education where the faculty and the facilities offered were of a higher standard, more expensive and available only to a few. Indian children who were educated in schools started by the British were offered the British curriculum, which was often geared to serve British interests, to create a work force well versed in the English language and who could then contribute their skills to the many initiatives the British established. Researchers reconstructing the history of education in the 18th and 19th centuries in India have documented that India did have a sustainable system of education even as late as the early years of the 19th century and that it was

systematically demolished over the next fifty years by the British colonizers who put in place their own system of education. In 1931 Mahatma Gandhi made a statement at Chatham House in London, which made headlines in the British press. He said "today, India is more illiterate than it was a fifty or a hundred years ago because the British Administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and left the root exposed and the beautiful tree perished." The beautiful tree Gandhi ji referred to was the tree of education.

With the system of education practiced by the Buddhists, the Muslim and Mughal rulers giving way to the British system of education the need for a fresh look at the existing system of education in the country became apparent. Credit for introducing for the first time a well structured and graded system of education must go to Charles Wood, the Chairman of the Board of Control of the East India Company, who in 1854 made several recommendations (known as Woods Dispatch) resulting in the first ever educational policy in the interests of India, which became an integral part of the general policy of the Indian government. With the transfer of power from the East India Company in 1857 to the British, a Commission of Education was set up under William Hunter in 1882. (The Hunter Commission) and was the first ever commission to look into education in the country as national policy.

Whatever the motivation the fact remains that during the first three decades of the 19th century many changes were taking place and several initiatives are documented showing that the importance of educating the intellectually disabled as well as other disabled was well understood and efforts were being made constantly to provide for them. The first school for special education was begun in North India in 1826 by Raja Kali Shankar Ghosal who started a facility for the visually handicapped in Varanasi.. Some of them are Special School for the visually handicapped in Ambala, Punjab, the first institute for the deaf and blind in Mumbai made possible with the introduction of Braille in India in 1886 , a special school in Kurseong in Bengal for the intellectually disabled (1918 and in Travancore in Kerala ( 1931) , a separate school for "idiots "in Chennai making a clear distinction between the intellectually disabled and the mentally ill in 1936, in Ranchi in 1939 and in 1941 , a school for the intellectually disabled as a direct outcome of The Children's Act and in 1944 another special school for intellectually disabled children started by Mrs Jai Vakil from her own residence in Mumbai.. A major contribution was made about this time by Srinivasan in 1954, who began the very first special class in a

mainstream school and was the precursor of the concept of integration in education. (The first residential institution for the mentally handicapped began in Switzerland by Hohann Guggenbuhl in 1816-1863) and the concept of special education and a systematic provision of services was begun by Jan – Marc Gaspard Itard in France (1774-1838).Disability Act in USA came into force in 1990 and in India 1995).

## SECOND WORLD WAR AND AFTER

At the end of the second world war , Sir John Sargent who was Educational Advisor to the Government of India prepared what is called the Sargent Report in 1944 .He recommended that provision for people with handicaps form an essential part of the national system of education (Sargent Report 1944). After India's independence, education continued to be with the Ministry of Education and during this time the visionary Kothari Commission did recommend the inclusion of all children with disabilities in mainstream schools in their plan of Action (Gupta 1984: Jangira 1995). Yet, in spite of the current system of education, with its western style and content, was introduced & funded by the British in the 19th century, following recommendations by Macaulay. Traditional structures were not recognized by the British government and have been on the decline since. Gandhi is said to have described the traditional educational system as a beautiful tree that was destroyed during British rule.

The British established many colleges like St. Xavier's College[disambiguation needed], Sydenham College, Wilson College and Elphinstone College in India. According to Prof. Emeritus M.G. Sahadevan, F.R.C.P. (London), the first medical college of Kerala was started at Calicut, in 1942-43, during World War II. Due to shortage of doctors to serve the military, the British Government decided to open a branch of Madras Medical College in Malabar, which was under Madras Presidency then. After the war, the medical school at Calicut was closed and the students continued their studies at Madras Medical College.

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