

have philanthropic private and community participation.

Unit-1 Wood's Despatch (1854)

Introduction

Lord Macaulay a prominent Historian and Educationalist. After travelling seventeen years all over the India when he returned to Britain, on 3 Feb 1835 in the Britain Assembly his speech was like this

I have travelled across the length and breadth of India and have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief, such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, that I don't think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and therefore I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation.

Thomas Babington Macaulay presented his minute on Indian Education that sought to establish the need to impart English Education to Indian natives.

★ British education policy in colonial India was initially almost non-existent as their sole purpose was to make profit through trade and other means. Gradually the importance of education was appreciated and the company started building a few institutes of higher learning. These learning centres taught Indian subjects in languages like Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. Persian was the court language too.

★ The Charter Act of 1813 was the first concrete step towards modern education in the country. This act set aside an annual sum of Rs 1 lakh to be used in education the 'subjects'.

★ One must note that missionaries were already present in the country and they were involved in this field as well. However they chiefly imparted religious education and their primary motive was christianizing the 'heathen' natives.

★ After the charter act there was a split among the British regarding the mode of education to be imparted to Indians. While the orientalist believed that Indians should be educated in their own languages and taught their own scriptures and texts, the other group decided that English education was the best kind to be imparted.

★ It was in the midst of this that Macaulay landed in India in June 1834, as the President of the General Committee of Public Instruction (GCPI).

→ Macaulay was a proud Englishman convinced of his own nation's greatness and achievements, which he considered the best whether it was in the sciences or the arts. Nothing wrong with that, except that he was perhaps too prejudiced to see things from a different perspective. His famous minute will reveal his scant regard for anything Indian.

→ In his minute on education, he justified the use of English as the medium of instruction and also the teaching of western education to Indians.

→ He also believed that western science was far superior to Indian knowledge.

→ Macaulay wanted the govt. to spend money only on imparting western education and not on oriental education. He advocated the shutting down of all colleges where only eastern philosophy and subjects were taught.

→ He also advocated that the govt. should try to educate only a few Indians, who would in turn teach the rest of the masses. This is called the 'downward filtration' policy.

→ He wanted to create a pool of Indians who would be able to serve British interests and be loyal to them. This class would be "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."

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* Macaulay's proposals were officially sanctioned in March 1835. In 1837, English was made the court language. In 1844 high government posts were open to Indians.

* Later the Wood's Despatch in 1854 regularised British efforts for education in India.

Merits of Wood's Dispatch

- * Wood's Despatch started a new era in Indian education system by clearly defining objectives of education, which is also called as Magna Carta of Indian Education.
- * It made the Government realise the importance of education for the people and presented a comprehensive scheme of education embracing primary, secondary, and higher education.
- * It recommended the creation of a separate Department of Public Instruction in five provinces and appointment of a Director to head the Department.
- * The principle of ~~downward~~ filteration theory was discarded by the Wood's Despatch and it encouraged the promoters of mass education. It recommended the establishment of indigenous schools.
- * By the grant-in-aid system many schools were benefited. The quality of education improved, and private organisations were encouraged to open new schools.

- * The Despatch encouraged higher education by recommending the establishment of universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and emphasized on the necessity of vocational education.
- * The Despatch recommended scholarship for the poor and deserving students.
- * The Despatch recommended the importance of establishing teachers' training institutes to improve the quality of teachers and their conditions of salaries.
- * Wood's Despatch encouraged language teaching. As a result, regional languages and classical languages were taught in the schools.

Concepts of Wood's Despatch

- * The Despatch, in reality promoted western literature and knowledge and government offices showed preferences for persons educated in English.
- * The education planning and management schemes remained only in black and white.
- * It neglected general education. Only the privileged class received education.
- * Indigenous schools remained neglected. Priority was given to people educated in English medium pattern with regard to government posts.

- * Departments of Education were opened in the five provinces but they could not promote the real interest of education.
- * The system of grant-in-aid did not operate in proper sense, as there was always the paucity of funds, the irregularity of their release and biased attitude towards the privately managed schools.
- * The wood's Despatch had a partial attitude towards the Christian missionaries, Christian religious books were easily made available to the students in the libraries.
- * The three universities were modelled on the London University and the Government's policy of nominating members to the Senate was biased. Therefore higher education was not related to Indian conditions.
- * The Despatch succeeded in only producing a class of clerks and accountants.
- * Wood's despatch could not remove the imbalance in Indian education system. It failed to develop character, initiative and leadership among students.

Conclusion

Although many demerits were found in woods despatch still it laid a long supposition on Indian Education system, as mentioned below: _____

- * Till 1856 in all regions Education Department was established.
- * Grant-in-aid was started in almost all regions.
- * Establishment of all these stages of schools were initiated.
- * Development was seen in University Education.

Hence woods despatch is said to be base of Indian Education system. We cannot deny the importance of it.