

Subject - History

Course – B.A. Part – III,

Paper - VI History of India (1765-1950)

Topic – Development Of English Education

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- a) **A little interest of Company** - The British were more successful to introduce the modern education. This was done not only by the British govt. but by the efforts of Christian missionaries and intellectuals of India also. The company took little interest for the education of his subject in first 60 years of his rule. The East India Company remained an institution of trade to earn profit.
- b) **Two Exceptions** - There were, however, two minor exceptions to this policy -- (i) Kolkata madrasa - in 1781 Warren Hastings set up this Madarsa to study and teaching of Muslim Law and related subjects (ii) Banaras Sanskrit college - In 1791, Jonathan Duncan started a Sanskrit college at Varanasi for the study of Hindu law and philosophy. Both these institutions were designed to provide a regular supply of qualified Indians to help the administration of law in the courts of the Company.
- c) **Pressure of Christian Missionaries and Humanitarians** -- Missionaries and their supporters and many humanitarians soon began to exert pressure on the Company to encourage and promote modern secular westernized education in India. Humanitarians, including many Indians believed that modern knowledge would be the best remedy for the social, economic and political ills of the country where as the missionaries believed that modern education would destroy the faith of the people in their own religions and lead them to adopt Christianity.

- d) **Charter Act of 1813** - A humble beginning was made in 1813 when the Charter Act incorporated the principle of encouraging learned Indians and promoting the knowledge of modern sciences in the country. The Act directed the company to spend the sum of Rs. One lakh for the purpose. But even this petty amount was not made available by the Company authorities.
- e) **Oriental- Occidental controversy** - For years a great controversy raged in the country on the question of the direction that this expenditure should take. While one section of opinion wanted it to be spent exclusively for the promotion of modern western studies, others emphasized on the expansion of traditional Indian learning. Even among those who wanted to spread Western learning, differences arose on the question of medium of instruction to be adopted in modern schools and colleges. Some recommended the use of Indian languages while others advocated the use of English. Unfortunately there was a great deal of confusion on this question.
- f) **Minutes of Macaulay** - In 1835, the government decided to devote the limited resources to the teachings of Western sciences and Literature through the medium of English alone. Lord Macaulay who was the Law Member of the Governor-General Councils, argued in famous Minute that Indian languages were not sufficiently developed to serve the purpose, and that "Oriental learning was completely inferior to western learning." Raja Ram Mohan Roy also fervently advocated the study of Western knowledge, which was seen by them as "the key to treasures of scientific and democratic thought of the modern West.
- g) **Downward filtration theory** - Government opened a few school and colleges instead of a large number of elementary schools. Neglecting the education of masses was sharply criticised. Since the allocated funds

could educate only a handful of Indians, it was decided to spend them in educating a few persons from the upper and middle classes who were expected to assume the task of educating the masses and spreading modern ideas. Education and modern ideas were thus supposed to filter downwards from the upper classes. This policy continued until the very end of the British rule.

- h) **Wood's Dispatch** - The Woods Dispatch of 1854 was another important step in the development of education in India. The Dispatch asked the government of India assume responsibility for the education of masses. It thus repudiated the "downward filtration" theory, at least on paper. In practice, the government did little to spread education and spent very little on it. As a result of the directions given by the Dispatch, departments of Education were instituted in all provinces and affiliating universities were set up in 1857 at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.
- i) **Reasons behind limited efforts in spreading Western learning** - (i) Agitation in favour of modern education by progressive Indians, Foreign Christian Missionaries and humanitarian officials. (ii) the other important reason was the Government's anxiety to economize on the cost of administration by getting a cheap supply of educated Indians. (iii) Educated Indians would help expand the market of the British manufacturers in India. (iv) Western education was expected to reconcile the people of India to British rule. (v) The British wanted to use modern education to strengthen the foundation of their political authority.
- j) **Weakness of the British Education system** - (i) A major weakness of the educational system was the neglect of mass education. Mass literacy was hardly better in 1921 than 1821. (ii) The emphasis on English as medium of instruction in place of the Indian languages also prevented the spread of education to the masses. (iii) Moreover, because the students

had to pay fees in school and colleges, education was quite costly and became a virtual monopoly of the richer classes and the city dwellers.

(iv) Another major lacuna in the early education policy was the almost total neglect of the education of girls for which no funds were allotted.

(v) The Company's administration also neglected scientific and technical education. By 1857 there was only three medical colleges Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. There was only one engineering college at Roorkee.

k) **Raja Ram Mohan Roy** - He was one of the earliest propagators of modern education which he looked upon as a major instrument for the spread of modern ideas in the country. He gave most enthusiastic assistance to David Hare for foundation of Hindu college. In addition, he maintained at his own cost an English school in Calcutta from 1817 in which, among other subjects, mechanics and philosophy of Voltaire were taught. In 1825, he established a Vedanta College in which courses both in Indian learning and Western social and physical sciences were offered. He was equally keen on making Bengali the vehicle of intellectual intercourse in Bengal. He compiled a Bengali Grammar. Through his translations, pamphlets and Journals he helped to evolve a modern and elegant prose style for that language.