



INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND EDUCATION POLICY DURING INDEPENDENT AND POST-INDEPENDENT PERIOD

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Education

Education is a cultural factor responsible for major social changes. Changes in attitude, basic pursuits and values are the result of education. Public support to social reforms and progressive legislative measures comes because of education. Mass education is what can accomplish modernization at the grassroots level and, to a large extent, overcome problems of social integration.

In ancient and medieval India, education was largely religiously oriented and confined to an elite. The beginning of the State system of education in India under the British rule may be traced back to the year 1813, Charter Act, when the East India Company was compelled to accept the responsibility of education of Indians. At that time a lakh of rupees was set apart for education. There was a conflict, soon thereafter, between Classicists and Anglicists, among the officials of East India Company, because there was some ambiguity in the language of 1813 Charter Act. It could mean that the British had wanted to introduce Western education and English as a language. The Classicists were against the introduction of English and emphasis on Science and Western education. The Classicists we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature, and to render them, by degrees, fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population". The Resolution of March 1835 was the first declaration of the British Government in the sphere of education in India.

National Movement and Education Policy 1920-37

The Nagpur Congress in 1920 passed a resolution to the effect that children and young people should be withdrawn from schools and colleges which are owned, aided and/or controlled by the British Government. Simultaneously a large scale effort was made to establish national schools and colleges in the various provinces of India. Thus, we find the establishment of national institutions within a year, such as Muslim University at Aligarh, Gujarat Vidyapith, Bihar Vidyapith, Kashi Vidyapith, Bengal National University, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith, Quami Vidyapith at Lahore and so on.

The Indian National Congress had created a movement in favour of nationalistic institutions at all levels supported by the private initiative of Indian money and leadership. Thus we notice that during the period 1920 to 1937, there was a movement throughout the country in favour of private schools, colleges and universities which were nationalistic in their approach and policies and were supported by the Indian Rajas, big landlords and other wealthy people on the financial side, but on the academic side the support had come from nationalist leaders at all levels.

This was also the period when the Indian language newspapers started flourishing. It all culminated in the scheme of Basic Education inspired by the leader of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi. A committee was appointed in 1936 with Dr. Zakir Hussain as Chairman to develop in detail a full scheme of Basic Education which was discussed, debated and passed in the 1937 Haripura Congress. Provincial autonomy was introduced by the British Government and most of the Provinces elected the Congress to power. So Basic Education was introduced practically throughout the country in 1937.



Basic Education: Wardha Scheme

The scheme of Basic Education was popularly known as the Wardha Scheme of Education. One of the central ideas, which later on created controversy, was the idea of craft work in school.

Central to the idea of basic education, as described by the conference of national workers which met at Wardha in October 1937 with Mahatma Gandhi as the President, was that the process of education should centre round some productive form of manual work. This was the idea of socially useful productive work, as it was described later on by Adiseshiah committee in 1978. It was believed that if children participate in socially useful productive work, it will break down the barriers of prejudice between manual and intellectual workers and will help the development of a sense of dignity of labour. It was also considered desirable from the point of view of making knowledge related to life.

The Curriculum of basic education had three important aspects, namely: craft work, physical environment and social environment.

1. Basic craft – such as spinning and weaving, carpentry, agriculture, fruit and vegetable gardening, leather work or any other craft for which the local and geographical conditions were favourable;
2. Mother tongue – the entire emphasis in the teaching of languages should be on mother tongue;
3. Mathematics – it was emphasized that mathematics should be centered on the knowledge of business practice and book-keeping.
4. Social Studies; General Science
5. Drawing; Music; Hindustani – the object of including Hindustani was to ensure that all children acquire some competence in national language.

Sargent Report 1944

The only other important development during the colonial period was what is commonly known as Sargent Report on Post War Educational Development, issued in 1944. Sargent Report accepted the idea of basic education as envisaged by the Central Advisory Board. It visualized two stages in basic education: the junior Menyan and the senior, the junior covering a period of five years and the senior covering a period of three years. The Sargent Report also mentioned pre-primary school course should cover a period of six years and the normal age of admission should be about eleven years. Two types of high school were visualized: academic and technical.

The Sargent Report recommended abolition of the intermediate course, and a three year degree course the first degree of the university. Thus see that the Sargent Report laid the foundation of present 10+2+3 the system recommended by the Education Commission (1964-66).

Education since Independence

An Educational policy was adopted by the Indian Parliament in 1968. Education was made an integral part of the national development effort. After independence there has been an effort to spread education to all levels of society. Statistics point to the fact that 99 percent of children in age group 6-11 years have been enrolled in school. However, to bring the remaining into the ambit of universal primary education is proving difficult because some reside in inaccessible areas, there is a deep-rooted prejudice against educating girls there and practical difficulties of distance and inaccessibility of schools. Moreover, the dropout rate is so high that various steps have been devised toThe Rex universal elementary education (UEE) is quite and elusive goal.



India reduce the percentage of dropouts. Non-formal education to provide educational facilities for the drop-outs and to fulfill the desire for additional education in the grown-up-drop-outs effect is being given a new orientation to make it purposeful and to attract a broad spectrum of the drop-out population.

Adult education programmers cover the age group 1-35 and have been vigorously implemented by the government with the cooperation of many voluntary agencies. Even then much has to be done to realize the targets which are 100% coverage adults by 2000 A.D.

With regard to the pattern of secondary education experiments have been going on since Independence. The 10+2+3 pattern of education which was recommended by Kothari Commission of 1965 is now being implemented in almost all the States and Union Territories of India. This pattern provides for two streams in the higher secondary schools; the academic streams paving the way for higher education and the vocational stream of terminal nature. However, very few schools have been able to provide this terminal education. As a result, schools with academic streams still abound, thereby defeating the very purpose of reducing the acute competition for college education. In many States education is free up to the lower secondary level, and in a few states education is free up to the higher secondary stage.

Higher education in India is imparted through about 180 universities and nearly 4500 colleges. In addition there are several institutions imparting specialized knowledge and technical skills. Since education is a State subject, the State Governments are free to open new universities. The university Grants Commission is an android authority which dispenses grants to the universities. But its formal sanction is not necessary to open a university. Taking advantage of this provision many State governments have opened a large number of universities in recent years.

The tremendous increase in the number of students and of educational institutions has given rise to the term "education explosion". No doubt, this has resulted in serious problems such as inadequacy of financial resources and infrastructure and dilution of personal attention to the education and character-formation of the offsprings. Also there is the unwanted side-effect of enormous increase in the number of educated unemployed. However, we cannot overlook the positive effects of education explosion. Mere increase in the percentage of literate people does not indicate a qualitative change in the educational standards of the people and a substantial useful improvement in manpower resources of India. Lack of employment opportunities cannot be blamed on the availability of educational opportunities and on higher standard of education of the employed and the unemployed. India, while population explosion in India may signify a serious problem, education explosion can, by no means, be viewed as an unalloyed evil.

Uncertainty and vacillation have marked the government's policy regarding the medium of education in India. Mahatma Gandhi wanted basic education to be imparted through the mother tongue. Bearing this in mind the Constitution provides that facilities for primary education in mother tongue should be provided to all Indian citizens and that, for this purpose, the Central Government may issue directives to the State Governments. Thus the requirements of Linguistic minorities are properly attended to. Even before independence, most of the students in schools had their education through the regional language/mother tongue.

There is a general feeling that the curricula adopted for different stages of education are substandard. This impression is not borne out by facts. The syllabi for irrelevant various courses in schools and



colleges 169 have been updated and upgraded. The right tone in this respect. Regarding recent changes in the curricula in schools and colleges, a mention may be made of the introduction of physical education and services like National Social Service (NSS) and National Cadet Corps (NCC) as part of the curriculum and of the inculcating of emotional national integration through teaching of India National Movement

Work –oriented education was advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and others. However, vocationalisation of education has proved an up-hill task. The present pattern of 10+2+3 with a vocational stream has troubled Work-oriented education was advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and others. However, vocationalisation touches only the fringe of the problem. The fact is that people resent being taught crafts and traditional occupations in the school. However, the modern commercial education which imparts skills in typing, shorthand and the like has met with better popular approval and demand. The core of the issue is whether education and employment should be di-linked. Such delinking will have the great merit of reducing attraction for college education. But delinking of jobs from degrees and certificates is fraught with unforeseen dangers. In any case, employment can be provided only on the basis of certain qualifications. If the qualifications are not to be determined by the universities and other conventional examining bodies, the same work will have to be done by the recruiting agency or somebody else. Besides, the scheme of not prescribing the bare minimum educational standards necessary for different posts. As pointed out earlier, education is not to be blamed for the widespread unemployment in India.

In recent times new educational opportunities have been invented, one such being correspondence education. Today virtually every university in India is offering correspondence courses for different degrees and diplomas. In fact correspondence education has opened new vistas for the educational system which could not successfully meet the challenging problem of providing infrastructure for multitudes of new entrants into the portals of higher education. The public demand for higher education was initially met through evening colleges, now correspondence education has come to the rescue of the worried education administrators.

The latest innovation of Open University has also been introduced in India in the form of Nagarjuna University at Hyderabad. An open university imparts education only through correspondence; and, in this respect, is to be differentiated from the regular universities which take up correspondence education in addition to the college education. Correspondence education provides an important means for drop-outs to improve their qualifications and for the employed the means to improve education and service prospects. In course of time the glamour for college education may decline if correspondence education is made very effective. The Indira Gandhi National Open University has been created at a national level.

Conclusion

The educational system in India faces numerous problems relating to educational institutions, teachers and students. Mismanagement of all types in educational institutions and maladministration of educational programmes are quite common. Commercialization of education, particularly technical and professional education, has come to stay; opening of private medical colleges, engineering colleges and polytechnics has become an attractive financial proposition. Teachers' indiscipline is rampant. While teachers may have genuine problems, their unions have increasingly resort to indiscipline and coercive means to achieve their goals. Basic commitment to their profession is lacking in many teachers.



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