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HISTORY(MAJOR) Non- CBCS under GU

The study material for Paper 6.1 of BA 6th Semester

PAPER 6.1

Unit-II: Cultural Awakening in the 19th century:

i) Spread of Western Education-Emergence of Intelligentsia, Growth of Press

Objectives

After reading this unit, you will be able to understand the brief history of the spread of western education in India.

- understand the colonial policy on education in India and the impact of western education on India society.
- understand the rise of the professional class in Indian society.
- be able to explain the political objectives and strategies of the emerging intelligentsia.

INTRODUCTION

The unit begins with a brief history of the spread of western education in India where we have described the main stages of introduction of English education in India and also tried to explain the nature of British education policy during colonial rule. Then we have decided to judge the impact of western culture on Indian people. The unit has substantially devoted to examining the rise of a new professional class in Indian society and their response to the colonial role in the 19th century India.

i) The spread of western education

In the beginning, we must make it clear that the spread of modern education in India was not solely the work of the British Government; the Christian missionaries and a large number of enlightened Indian also played an essential role in the introduction of western education in India.

During the early part of their rule, the East India Company – trading, profit-making concern- took little interest in the education of its subjects in India. However, there were two very minor exceptions to this policy. Warren Hastings, himself an intellectual, set up the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781 for the study and learning of Persian and Arabic. In 1791 Jonathan Duncan started a Sanskrit College at Varanasi, where he was the resident. This college began at Varanasi (Benaras) for the study of Hindu law and philosophy. These early attempts for the education of the people in oriental languages met with little success. The Christian missionaries who were eager to spread Christianity in India opened schools for the education of Indian Children in a Christian atmosphere. They also advocated the teaching of Western literature and the Christian religion through the medium of English. The Serampore missionaries, in particular, were very enthusiastic for the spread of education. Mention may be made of the Fort William College established by Lord Wellesley in 1800 for the training of the civil servants of the company, in the language and customs of India. However, the Court of Directors ordered the closure of this college in 1802.

Missionaries, and their supporters and many *humanitarians* soon began to exert pressure on the company to encourage and promote modern secular, westernised education in India. While the humanitarians, including many Indians, believed that advanced knowledge would be the best remedy for the social, economic and political ills of the country, the missionaries, on the other hand, thought that modern education would destroy the faith of the people in their own religion and lead them to adopt Christianity. The Court of Directors made a humble beginning towards the development of education in India in 1813 when the **Charter Act (1813)** provided for an annual expenditure of one lakh of rupees `for the revival and promotion of literature and encouragement of the learned natives of India, and the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the science among the inhabitants of the British territories. ` This is how the colonial system of education got started in India.

Orientalist –Anglicist Controversary- The clause of Charter Act of 1813, remained almost a dead letter till 1823. The sum of Rs 1 lakh could not be spent entirely in any year from 1813 to 1823. A great controversy began 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 education others desired that, while Western science and literature should be thought to prepare students to take up jobs, emphasis should be placed 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 language called **Vernacular** at the time, for the purpose, while others advocated the use of English. Unfortunately, there was a great deal of confusion on this question. Many people failed to distinguish between English as a medium of instruction and English as a subject for study and between Indian language as media and traditional Indian learning as the main object of study. This came to be known as the Orientalist- Anglicist Controversary.

This controversy was settled by Lord T.B Macaulay. Lord T.B.Macaulay came to India as a Law Member of the Governor General's Executive Council. He was also appointed as the President of the General Committee on Public instruction by William Bentinck, the Governor-General and Macaulay were asked to deal with the controversy. This led to the famous Minutes of Macaulay in 1835, in which he favoured the viewpoints of the Anglicist party and argued for western education through the medium of English. He showed great contempt for Indian custom and literature when he said that `...a single shelf of a sound European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. He argued in his minute that Indian languages were not sufficiently developed to serve the purpose and that ` oriental learning was utterly inferior to European education. `

The Government of Lord William Bentinck in the Resolution of 7 March 1835 accepted the viewpoint of Macaulay that, in future, the object of the company's Government should be the promotion of European literature and sciences through the medium of English language and all funds were to be spent for that purpose. This was a systematic effort on the part of the British Government to educate the upper class of India through the medium of English language. Education of the masses was not aim of Macaulay He, therefore, wrote. `...that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. He rather supported the **`downward filtration theory`** and said` we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; the quality of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and intellect` `The downward filtration theory was to be followed mainly to cut down expenditure on education. Since the allotted fund could educate only a handful of Indians, it was decided to spend them in teaching a few persons from the upper and middle classes who were expected to assume the task of educating the masses and spreading modern ideas among them. Education and modern designs were thus

supposed to filter or radiate downwards from the upper classes. This policy continued until the very end of the British rule. The Resolution of March 1835 was the first Declaration of the British Government in the sphere of education in India. So, I think by now, you have gained some idea on Macaulay's views on education.

The Government of India acted quickly, particularly in Bengal, on the decision of 1835 and made English the medium of instruction in schools and colleges.

Sir Charles Wood's Dispatch on Education 1854

The view of Macaulay was confirmed and further strengthened by Wood's dispatch in 1854. The Wood's dispatch (the document dispatched from the court of Directors and popularly named after Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control. This dispatch was an essential step in the development of education in India. Charles showed a more extensive vision about education and prepared his comprehensive dispatch on the scheme of future education in India. This dispatch came to be considered as the *Magna Carta* of English education in India. The scheme outlined a coordinated system of education on all India basis. It declared that the aim of Government education policy was the teaching of western education. The dispatched asked Government of India to assume responsibility for the education of the masses. As per the directions of the dispatch, Departments of Education were instituted in all provinces, and affiliating universities were set up in 1857 at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras on the pattern of London University. In a very significant move, Wood's dispatch gave full support for fostering the education of women in India. As a result of all these, India witnessed rapid westernisation of its educational system. The indigenous system gradually gave place to the western system of education. Most of the educational institutions during this period were run by European Headmasters and Principals under the Education department. The Missionary enterprise played its part and managed several institutions. Gradually private educational institutions also started coming up.

The Hunter Education Commission 1882-83

In 1882 the Government appointed a commission under the Chairmanship of W.W. Hunter to review the progress of education in the country since the dispatch of 1854. One of the main objectives of the Commission was to survey the status of elementary school throughout the Indian empire and to devise means for the improvement of the same.

The relevant recommendations of the Commission were i) Encouragement to indigenous education.

ii) A more significant measure of effort should be directed to provide, extend and improve primary education.

iii) In the field of secondary education – a model high school may be established in such districts, where they are required in the interest of the people and where the people are not wealthy enough to create such schools.

iv) In the upper classes of the high schools, there should be two divisions: one leading to entrance examination of the universities and other of a practical nature preparing students for commercial and vocational careers.

V) The Education Commission drew attention to the inadequate facilities for female education and made a recommendation for its expansion.

The twenty years following the report of the Commission saw unprecedented growth and expansion of secondary and collegiate education in India.

Indian Universities Act 1904

Lord Curzon got the Indian Universities Act passed to establish control over Indian Universities and colleges. This act gave the universities the right of teaching along with the power of conducting examinations. The universities were also given freedom of appointment of teachers, development of libraries and laboratories and encouragement to teachers to do research.

Government Resolution on Education Policy, 21 February 1913

This Resolution was passed in view of the demand of the nationalist leader of India for the introduction of compulsory primary education in British India. However, in its Resolution of 21 February 1913, the Government of India refused to recognise the mandatory principle of education but accepted the proposal of the removal of illiteracy. Regarding secondary education, the Resolution stressed the need for improvement of the quality of the schools. As far as the university education was concerned, the Resolution declared that a university should be established for each province and teaching activities of the universities should be encouraged.

In this manner, several other education commissions were also appointed during the British period. Some of these commissions were The Sadler University Commission (1917-1918), The Hartog Committee (1929) etc.

Thus, after studying the progress of western education in India during British rule, it may be said that among the cultural factors western education made the most profound impression upon the Indian mind and fostered a new attitude in them. The English system of education though used by the rulers in their interest of administration, it, no doubt, opened to the newly educated Indians the floodgates of liberal European thought. The liberal and radical view of European writers like Milton, Shelly, Mill, Spenser Rousseau and Voltaire inspired the Indian intelligentsia with the ideals of democracy, sovereignty liberty nationality and self-government and they began to understand the true nature of British imperialism in India. The spread and popularity of the English language among the educated people in all parts of India gave a common language to them- ***a lingua franca*** –through the medium of which they communicate with one another.

Keywords and terms

Colonies and Colonialism- territories inhabited or not, acquired by conquest or settlement by a people or Government previously alien to that territory; and, imposed foreign rule upon such land.

Vernacular- the language is spoken in a particular area or by a particular group, especially one that is not the official or written language.

Sovereignty – the condition of being an independent country with the power to govern itself.

Magna Carta- a document officially stating the political and legal rights of the English people, that King John was forced to sign in 1215(often referred to as the basis for modern English law.)

Oriental- connected with or typical of the Eastern part of the world, countries in Eastern Asia, including China, Japan.

Orientalist- a person who studies the languages, arts, etc. of oriental countries.

Lingua franca- a shared language of communication used between people whose primary languages are different

Check your progress

1. Who established Calcutta Madrasa in 1781?
2. What was the first declaration of the British Government in the sphere of education in India?
 - a) Wood's dispatch.

- b) Macaulay Minutes
 - c) Hunter commission
 - d) Govt of India Resolution.
3. What is the downward Filtration theory?

2 Rise of Professional Classes and emerging Intelligentsia.

Dear friends, with the advent of the British rule immense intellectual and cultural changes, characterised the 19th century India. We see the rise of a new class of people in Indian society during the British period. This was the rise of English educated middle class. Now naturally the question comes to our mind that who actually constituted this class of people. In the 19th century, British administrative and economic innovations gave rise to a new professional or urban middle-class people in Indian towns. The new class readily learnt English for it promoted employment and gave a sense of prestige. The newly educated class usually adopted the professions of junior administrators, lawyers, doctors; teachers' etc. Some of them visited England for pursuing higher studies. While in England they saw with their own eyes the working of political institutions of a free country. On their return to India, they found the situation of India was quite opposite of England. These foreign educated people, along with the ever-expanding English educated intelligentsia formed the middle-class intelligentsia in India. The middle-class intelligentsia led the Indian to social, political, religious and cultural sphere and helped a lot in the modernisation of India. According to P.Spear, 'the new middle class was a well-integrated all-India class with the varied background but a common foreground of knowledge, ideas and values...it was a minority in Indian society but a dynamic minority...it had a sense of unity of purpose and hope.' This middle class became the new soul of modern India and in due course infused whole India with its spirit. It provided leadership to the Indian National Congress in all its stages of growth, and according to Prof Bipan Chandra, they formed the backbone of the Indian national movement. Let us now try to analyse the role played by this emerging intelligentsia in the 19th century.

Prof Bipan Chandra has rightly pointed out that that the most important and creative role in the rise of Indian nationalism was played by the modern Indian intelligentsia. According to Prof Chandra, it was the first social group in the country to recognise the fact that the establishment of British power in India marked a sharp break with the past and beginning of a new era. During the first half of the 19th century, they had adopted a very positive approach towards the colonial rule. Their approach to colonial rule can be discussed in the following manner.

They had believed that the restructuring of Indian society could occur under the British Government only because they considered Britain as the most advanced country of the time.

They hoped that with the help of the British people Indian could get rid of their past backwardness.

In the economic realm, they were attracted by modern industry and the prospect of economic development and prosperity. They hoped that Britain, economically most advanced country of the time,

would industrialise India too.

In the political field, they were attracted by modern thought and the doctrine of Sovereignty of the people leading to democracy, freedom of speech, **the Press**, and the right to criticise the rulers publicly. They thought that Britain would introduce these measures in India which would ultimately lead to the cultural and social regeneration of its people.

Thus, for nearly half a century, the modern Indian intelligentsia believed that the re-shaping and transformation of Indian society could and would occur under British rule only. Consequently, they supported the British Government even during the revolt of 1857 and described it as '*providential*' or 'ordained by gods that be'.

However, the second half of the 19th century witnessed the gradual disillusionment of the intellectuals. They now began to see that their expectations were misplaced and were based on wrong assessment of the nature and character of the British rule. The intellectuals realised that:

In reality, the British *Colonialism* was disrupting Indian Economy and preventing the rise of modern industry and agriculture.

Instead of promoting democracy and self-government, British administrators were arguing for imposition of permanent benevolent despotism in India by saying that Indians were unfit for autonomy or freedom.

The colonial rulers neglected the education of the masses; curbed civil liberties and pursued a policy of divide and rule.

Therefore, modern India intelligentsia began to examine and analyse the basic character of the British Government again. By the end of the 19th century, they had come to realise that what had appeared to them earlier as the modernisation of India was its colonialisation. They now decided to create political associations to spread political education and to launch a nationalist political movement against imperialism.

KeyWords-

Intelligentsia- the people in a country or society who are well educated and are interested in culture, politics literature etc

Providential- lucky because it happens at the right time but without being planned, timely.

Check your Progress

1. Which of the following statements are right or wrong? Mark (✓) or (X)

- i) The Indian intelligentsia always remained loyal to the British.
- ii) The British opposed Self-government for Indian people.
- iii) Indian Economy flourished under British rule.