

Ancient Education System: A Critical Thinking on the Major Educational Revolutionary Movements From 1835 To 1946

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Abstract

The history of the education system in India has been rich and diverse since ancient times. The Gurukul system or Vedic system, Buddhist education and Madrasa education were prominent among them. The arrival of Lord Macaulay in India in 1835 brought a revolutionary change in the Indian education system, which greatly influenced the traditional system of India and promoted a modern education or British/English education system. This research paper critically reflects upon all-important the educational reform movements that happened between 1835 to 1946 (Macaulay's Declaration in 1835, Auckland's Declaration in 1837, Adams Report in 1838, Wood's Dispatch in 1854 in major educational reforms, Wood's Declaration in 1864, Hunter Commission in 1882, Indian University Commission in 1902-04, Curzon Policy (Rally Commission), Gokhale Bill in 1911, Kolkata University Commission or Sadler Commission in 1917, Hartang Commission in 1829, Wood Award Report in 1935, Indian Renaissance, Wardha Education Conference/Basic Education Policy/Basic Talim/Zakir Hussain Committee in 1937, Sargent Plan in 1944, etc) or all the major educational reform movements that happened before independence. It is based on secondary data of a qualitative method, which focuses on an analytical study on government reports, views of social reformers, historical documents, books, magazines, dissertations, university news, views of experts. The main objective of this study is to study the major reform movements in the Indian education system between 1835 and 1946-47. Under which we will try to understand the impact of British education policy on Indian society, and to do an analytical study of major educationists and the movement. Along with understanding its relevance in the current education system and how these movements have affected Indian society and the freedom struggle.

Keywords: Major social reform movements from 1835 to 1946, education system, British education policy, colonial India, Indian Renaissance.

Introduction

The earliest history of education in India is found in Vedic education, which was given in Sanskrit language. And it is also called Brahmin period education. In Vedic period education, along with providing education of Vedas and Upanishads to the students, practical education

on religion, morality was also given. After Vedic period education, the practice of Buddhist education started in our India. During the Buddhist period education, three important universities were established in India - Takshila University, Vikramshila University and Nalanda University. During Buddhist education, in about the fifth century, Bakhtiyar Khilji destroyed these three universities and gave rise to Islamic education, which led to the beginning of Islam religion and Islamic education in India. In 1557 AD, the Mughals were defeated in the Battle of Plassey and the education system of India came under the East India Company. As a result, the education system of India came under the hands of the British. And modern education was born in India, which can be called English education. The foundation of English education was laid in 1813, when in the Charter Act of 1813, a sum of ₹100000 was used for provision of educational grants. But in Article 43 of this act, it was not clearly mentioned in which education this money would be spent on. English education or Indian education. Because the British wanted that this money should be spent on English education, while the Indians wanted that this money should be spent on Indian education. That is, a dispute arose between the two sides regarding the money, which is known in history as Oriental- Occidental Controversy. Since the Oriental- Occidental dispute in India became serious, the British Parliament ordered to send Lord William Batting to India to end this dispute. But Batting sent legal expert Lord Macaulay to India in 1835 to resolve this dispute. Under this study- Macaulay's manifesto in 1835, Auckland's manifesto in 1837, Adams Report in 1838, Wood's dispatch in 1854 in major educational reforms, Wood's manifesto in 1864, Hunter Commission in 1882, Indian University Commission 1902-04 i.e. Curzon Policy (Railway Commission), Gokhale Bill in 1911, Kolkata University Commission or Sadler Commission in 1917, Hartang Commission in 1829, Wood Award Report 1935, Indian Renaissance, Wardha Education Conference/Basic Education Policy/Basic Talim/Zakir Hussain Committee 1937, Sergeant Plan 1944, etc. are important. Due to the influence of these revolutionary movements, the role of education in Indian society was redefined. Out of which the access to education was widened especially for women, poor class or Dalit class. In this research paper, a critical reflection has been done on the major educational revolutionary movements that took place between 1835 and 1846 and the effectiveness of these movements. At the same time, we will try to understand how these movements affected Indian society and the freedom struggle.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this research is to study the movements and reforms in the ancient Indian education system between 1835 and 1946. This research paper is to understand the British

Research Question

- What were the major educational movements between 1835 and 1946?
- What impact did these movements have on the Indian education system and society?
- What is the relevance of educational reforms in the current education system?

Research Method

This study is based on qualitative method. Various sources have been used for this study:

- Secondary Source - In this study, the researcher has studied critical articles, research papers and historical books related to education as secondary sources.
- Study of Historical Sources - In this study, a critical study of major educational revolutionary movements from 1835 to 1946 has been done as historical sources.

Concept of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is one of the best features of the human mind, which is their ability to think, understand and use discretion. When this ability of a human being to think, understand and use discretion is used with a logical, analytical and objective approach, it is called critical thinking. Critical thinking teaches a human not only to think, but also the art of learning "how to think". Critical thinking is not just a means of condemning or opposing a subject, but it is a concept or process in which a human being, on the basis of experience, logic and facts, deeply examines any subject or problem and reaches a transparent decision.

- Literal meaning of critical thinking- Critical thinking is made up of two words- criticism + thinking = critical thinking. That means "to think while criticizing."

Criticism does not only mean negative but it also means objective, critical and balanced evaluation. That is, in this way we can say that "critical thinking is such thinking which is unbiased and based on logic and evidence in solving any problem and deeply analyses any subject, idea, information, problem or belief." This thinking is not only based on emotions or beliefs of individuals. Rather, critical thinking is both positive and negative.

This thinking guides us towards analysis of elements, validating logic in finding solutions to problems, comparing alternative viewpoints and taking appropriate decisions.

- **Some definitions of critical thinking**

Robert H. Ennis:

"Critical thinking is the reasonable and committed reflection that decides whether to accept, reject or stop an idea."

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Richard Paul:

"Critical thinking is a self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitoring and self-correcting thinking process. It conforms to intellectual standards such as clarity, accuracy, logic, relevance and depth."

John Dewey:

"Critical thinking is a type of active, careful and continuous thinking in which the basis and consequences of a belief or knowledge are carefully examined."

Benjamin Bloom (in the context of taxonomy):

"It is a high-level cognitive process, which includes steps like analysis, synthesis and evaluation."

Major Educational Revolutionary Movements 1835-1946

Macaulay's Manifesto 1835

Macaulay interpreted Article 43 of Act-1813 to end the Oriental-Occidental Controversy in such a way that this controversy ended to a large extent-

- According to Macaulay, this money will be spent on Indian education only but the right to do so will be with the East India Company and not with the Indian people.
- This money will be spent on literature only but literature means English literature and not Persian, culture and Hindi literature. Because according to Macaulay- "The entire Indian literature of India is equivalent to a 'book' kept inside a cupboard in the library of the University of London."
- According to this policy of Macaulay, scholars will be prepared through this money. A scholar will be the person who has knowledge of English literature. Macaulay also said that, in the English medium university, only the upper-class Indian students or the students of the rich class will have the right to get education along with English. And when these upper-class Indian students or the students of the rich class get educated, then they will provide education to the people or students of the class below them. And in this way, this education will reach from the upper class to the lower class. This idea of Macaulay is called the filtration theory.

Auckland's Declaration 1837

Since the Oriental-Western dispute was not completely resolved by the declaration, William Bentinck and Macaulay were called back to England. And Lord Auckland was sent to India to end this dispute. Lord Auckland was also a follower of English civilization, but he was under immense pressure regarding this dispute. Therefore, in his declaration, he made a provision to

spend ₹31000 out of the total amount of 1 lakh on Indian education. And thus the Oriental-Western dispute ended.

John Adams Report 1838-39

Along with Lord Adams, John Adams also came to India for the propagation of missionary work. But he was so impressed by Indian education and literature that in his report on Bengal's education, he declared Indian literature to be superior to English literature. And he spoke of not advocating the spread of English education in India. Also, he recommended opening a teacher training institute in every province.

All the three reports (1838, 1839 and 1841) presented by Adams were rejected by the British Parliament.

Wood's Declaration 1854

Wood's Dispatch is called the Magna Carta of English education in India. Because it presented suggestions on holistic education (all aspects of education) in India. However, it advocated keeping English as the medium of education. On the suggestions of this manifesto of Wood, Kolkata University, Mumbai University, Madras University were established in 1857.

- Wood Dispatch suggested the establishment of an educational inspection and supervision department in each province.
- On the suggestion of Wood Dispatch, the post of an education director was created in each province.
- Through this manifesto of Wood Dispatch, along with male teacher education, female teacher education was also suggested.

Hunter Commission 1882

This commission was formed by Viceroy Lord Ripon mainly in the context of primary education. This commission had a total of 20 members including the chairman, out of which 6 were Indian members.

Recommendations

- The administration, management and finance of primary education should be given to the local bodies i.e. Gram Panchayat, Nagar Palikas, Municipal Corporation etc. i.e. primary education should be decentralized.
- The medium of primary education will be local or provincial languages.
- The main objective of primary education will be to provide birth education or education of practical life.

- Those subjects should be included in the curriculum which can contribute to a person's practical life.

- Trained teachers should be appointed in primary schools, and to increase the number of trained teachers, the number of teacher training institutes (DIET) should be increased etc.

Although the main objective of this commission was to give recommendations in the context of primary education. But the commission has also presented its recommendations in the context of secondary and higher education.

Indian University Commission or Curzon Education Policy or Raleigh Commission 1902-1904

Lord Curzon organized an education conference in Shimla in 1901.

The foundation of Indian University was laid in this conference. The scope of work of this commission is mainly related to higher education or university education. Hence, its recommendations are also linked to the University Education Commission.

Recommendations

- All universities in India should accept the responsibility of providing recognition and certificate distribution as well as formal education to the students.
- The government should itself shoulder the responsibility of higher education. For this, the government should open a **central education department** in every province.
- Changes were made in the structure of the **Senate and Syndicate** for the creation of the university's administration management.
- **Educational inspector and supervisor** were introduced at the higher education level
- Advocated keeping English as the medium of education.
- Most emphasis was given on moral education at the higher level. The word religious education was removed from moral education, etc.

Gokhale Bill 1911

The first recommendation made by the government regarding providing primary education in India as compulsory education and completely free education is Gokhale Bill.

Kolkata University Commission or Sadler Commission 1917

In Kolkata University or Sadler Commission 1917, there was a revolutionary change in higher education in India. Like -

- Higher education was separated from school education.
- Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) was established.

- Court and Executive Council were formed in place of Senate and Syndicate in the university.
- Teacher Board and Scholar Council were established for curriculum development and examination related decisions in the university.
- Subject wise departments should be established in the university etc.

Hartang Committee 1929

The Hartang Committee highlighted the problem of wasteful and obstructive education in India's primary education. Its chairman was Dr. Philip.

Wood Award Report 1937

Technical education in India was born through the Wood Award Report. It was recommended to start independent technical education and curriculum at higher and higher secondary levels in India.

Wardha Education Conference/ Basic Education Policy/ Basic Education/ Zakir Hussain Committee/ New Education Education/ Basic Education 1937

In this conference Gandhiji presented his personal viewpoint in the context of Indian education, especially in the context of **primary education**. And also mention the 7 basic principles-

- Compulsory and free primary education should be provided to children between 7 and 14 years of age.
- Mother tongue should be the medium of education.
- Everyone should have equal right to receive primary education.
- Education should be organized according to the needs of rural people. Also, everyone should be motivated to receive education compulsorily. That is, provision of general education should be made.
- Moral education should be given place along with language and constituted subjects.
- Knowledge of agricultural education and hand skills should be provided, that is, education should be linked to real life.
- Self-reliant education, that is, autonomous education should be conducted. So that students can become self-reliant.

In Wardha Education Conference, Gandhiji gave the formula of 3H instead of **3R** under education.

- HEAD
- HEART

- HAND

Sargent Plan 1944

In 1944, under the Sargent Plan, modern higher education was laid in India. Under this, a state advisory board of education was formed.

The concept of national education system was developed for the first time in India. On the recommendation of the Sargent Plan, the UGC (University Grants Committee) was formed in 1914.

The University Grants Committee worked as a regulatory body to coordinate all the then universities since 1945.

After independence, the first commission in the context of education was formed in 1948, the University Education Commission or Radha Krishna Commission. It gave some important suggestions in the context of higher education -

- University Grants Commission should be formed for the control, administration and management of higher education in India.
- Some education should be reorganized throughout India as well as structural reforms should be done.
- The problems of the then Indian University should be found out. Also, the problems related to administration and finance in the university should be resolved.
- To determine the objectives of education.
- UGC was formed on 28 December 1953. The then Education Minister Dr. Abdul Kalam ji laid the foundation stone of UGC in 1953. Later in 1956, UGC got the status of a statutory body by making a law in the Parliament.

Impact of the movement on Indian education system and society

Indian education system was a period of transition and struggle from 1835 to 1946. Whenever English colonialism tried to implement a new education system in accordance with its colonial policies by putting the Indian traditional Gurukul system or Vedic education and Madrasa system or Muslim education at stake, many Indian ideas, social reformers and movements tried to make education accessible, modern and full of national consciousness.

Indian Education System The educational movement between 1835 and 1946 created a dual consciousness in the Indian society; on the one hand, it exposed the limitations of the colonial education system and on the other hand, it took concrete initiatives towards modernity, scientific approach and social reform. The Indian education system during this period was not

only a medium of knowledge but it was also the basis of social change, nation transformation and self-respect.

The present era is the era of globalization, innovation and digital revolution. In this era, education should not be just a means to pass exams but it should be made a medium for the overall development of the student. “Educational reform is like a bridge in this era which is laid on the foundation of an inclusive, strong and self-reliant India.”

Relevance of educational reforms in the current education system

Education is the soul of the nation. Because it is the basis of social, economic and cultural development along with communicating knowledge. In a country like India with a huge population and diversity, it is necessary to change the education system from time to time in accordance with the changing social, technological and global contexts. That is why educational reforms are not only necessary in the present era, but it has become necessary to restructure the entire system.

- Skills like coding, entrepreneurship, communication skills and critical thinking have been included in the curriculum contained in the new education policy 2020, so that vocational and skill education can be brought into the mainstream in the country.
- Provision of life skill based programs in colleges and schools.
- Change in teaching methods in the current technological era.
- Improvement in the infrastructure of government colleges and schools.
- Regular training and accountability system.
- Ensuring equal quality education.
- Continuous and comprehensive evaluation system in education. And group activities, project and practical evaluation system to be promoted.
- Strengthening special education services in schools for students with special needs. Along with linking their nutrition and health services, scholarships to education. Strengthening social inclusion and gender equality.
- Orienting higher education institutions more and more towards innovation and research.

Results

- The traditional education system collapsed.
- Women's education was encouraged.
- National sentiment developed.
- Through this education, young Indians joined the freedom struggle and the freedom struggle gained strength.

- Modern education institutions were reorganized and emerged.
- The Gandhian education model developed, which made the teacher self-reliant, professional and morally perfect.

Conclusion

This research paper focuses on some of the main points of the ancient education system and the main educational movements from 1835 to 1946.

Ancient Education System: Major Educational Revolutionary Movements from 1835 - 1946 Revolutionary changes took place in the Indian education system. While the England education policy or British policy influenced the traditional teacher system on one hand, on the other hand, the reform movement gave a new direction to the Indian education system. With the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Gandhi etc. and other social reformers, education was linked to nation building. The legacy of these movements can still be seen in the Indian education system. The current New Education Policy 2020 is also highly inspired by Gandhian thoughts and the principle of Indian Renaissance.

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